BOOK NO. [redacted] | ACCESSION 67610

SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC LIBRARY
VITA SINE LITERIS MORS EST

FORM 3431 30M-10-41

SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC LIBRARY
3 1223 00364 6222

DATE DUE

DEMCO 38-297

Marguerite D'Angoulême

In her 17.th Year

THE LIFE

OF

MARGUERITE D'ANGOULÊME,

Queen of Navarre, Duchesse D'Alençon and De Berry,

SISTER OF FRANCIS I., KING OF FRANCE, AND AUTHOR OF
"THE HEPTAMERON."

FROM NUMEROUS UNPUBLISHED SOURCES, INCLUDING MS. DOCUMENTS IN THE BIBLIOTHÈQUE IMPERIALE, AND THE ARCHIVES DU ROYAUME DE FRANCE, AND ALSO THE PRIVATE CORRESPONDENCE OF QUEEN MARGUERITE WITH FRANCIS I., ETC.

BY

MARTHA WALKER FREER.

"La Royne Marguerite,
La plus belle fleur d'élite,
Qu'onques la terra enfanta."
RONSARD.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

CLEVELAND: The Burrows Brothers Company, PUBLISHERS — M DCCC XCV.

3 1223 00364 6222

B M333f 1895
v.1
Freer, Martha Walker,
1822-1888.
The life of Marguerite
d'Angouleme, Queen of
1895.

67610

PREFACE.

A LIFE of Marguerite d'Angoulême, Duchesse d'Alençon and Queen of Navarre, the illustrious sister of Francis I., is now for the first time offered to the public. The eventful career of this princess affords incidents which have been deemed worthy of indefatigable controversy, — theologians, historians, and poets having alike applied their pens to discuss the conduct and the actions of Queen Marguerite, although her life has never been made, even by her own countrymen, the subject of a complete and distinct biography. The varied stores of French history offer, nevertheless, no theme more worthy of research and study than the career of this great princess, who exercised so potent an influence over the politics and the manners of the age of which she was herself the brightest ornament.

Upon the private character and domestic virtues of the Queen of Navarre history leaves no stain. She claims from us, also, deep sympathy for her religious faith. One of the earliest converts of the Reformed Church, Marguerite suffered persecution for her creed; under Providence, her generous interposition preserved the pure faith of the Gospel from extinction throughout the realm of France, while her bounty aided the progress of the Reformation in many distant lands. Such as Queen Marguerite was in her life, both public and domestic, it has been the aim of the author to portray her, without regard to other considerations than the full development of truth.

The published and manuscript documents and letters indispensable for the biography of Queen Marguerite are dispersed

over innumerable volumes. This extent of research has been, however, decreased as respects some of the most important manuscript documents by the publication, under a commission issued by the late king of the French, Louis Philippe, of manuscripts connected with the history of France. A collection of letters written by the Queen of Navarre has thus been published by "La Société de l'Histoire de France," and edited by Monsieur Génin. The author of these pages wishes to acknowledge the assistance which she has derived from this series of letters; and likewise from the collection of state papers edited by Monsieur Champollion-Figeac relative to the captivity of Francis I. In addition to these, many other documents and letters, hitherto unpublished, have been added; so that, for the first time, a complete history is offered to the reader of the embassy of the Duchesse d'Alençon to the court of Toledo to obtain her brother's release from captivity; and also of the subsequent negotiations with the Emperor Charles V. during this romantic episode in the lives of Francis and Marguerite.

The thanks of the author are in an especial manner due to Monsieur Paulin Paris, for the kind and courteous attention which she has received from him while making the necessary historical inquiries at the Bibliothèque Impériale for this biography of Marguerite d'Angoulême. She desires also to acknowledge the aid which she has received during the revision of the following pages from the judicious suggestions of another friend, whose name she is not permitted to mention.

The author has assured herself of the strictest historical accuracy; and none of the authorities named at the foot of her pages have been quoted without previous examination. In every instance the number of the volume, and the page in which the passage cited is to be found, has not been given; but as the narrative extends only from the year 1492 to 1549, an easy reference to that era in the works quoted will verify any of the author's statements. The name and the number of the folios in quotations from manuscript authorities, have been scrupulously indicated.

Some apology, perhaps, is owing to the readers of the life of the Queen of Navarre for the length at which some of the domestic events of the reign of Francis I. are detailed. The history of Queen Marguerite and of her chivalrous brother is inseparably connected; and their unity of interest and design so entire — as every incident which influenced the fortunes of the king found its echo in the fate of his sister — that the sequence and harmony of the narrative would have been materially injured by the omission of these details, which are indispensable for the elucidation of the correspondence and the actions of the Queen of Navarre.

LIFE OF

MARGUERITE, QUEEN OF NAVARRE.

CHAPTER I.

MARGUERITE, daughter of Charles d'Orléans, Count d'Angoulême,[1] and of Louisa of Savoy, was born in the castle of Angoulême, at two o'clock in the morning of the eleventh day of April, 1492.

At the period of Marguerite's nativity her parents were living under the cloud of royal displeasure, in honourable banishment from court, at their castle of Angoulême; and so unimportant an event was the birth of their illustrious daughter deemed that few contemporary historians have considered it worthy of record. But, although no state ceremonials or public festivities celebrated the birth of the infant Marguerite, she was welcomed with joyous exultation by both her parents, who received her as a special gift from Heaven, sent to cheer and console them in their adversity. Louisa of Savoy had just completed her sixteenth year when she gave birth to her daughter: with proud triumph the countess minutely chronicles this event in her curious diary, in the following words:—

My daughter Marguerite was born in the year 1492, on the 11th day of April, at two o'clock in the morning; or, counting after the manner of astrologers, on the tenth day of April, at ten minutes past its fourteenth hour.[2]

[1] Charles d'Orléans, Count d'Angoulême, Seigneur d'Espernay, de Romorantin, de Fere, de Tardenois, de Mesle, and de Chisay in Poitou.

[2] Journal de Louise de Savoie, Duchesse d'Angoulême, d'Anjou, et de Valois.

With more than the pride and tenderness of a young mother for her first-born child, the Countess Louisa bent over the cradle of her infant; and it is recorded that, never weary of contemplating the features of the unconscious babe, she predicted her daughter's future greatness, and the dawn of those intellectual gifts which, developed in a maturer age, won for Marguerite the respect and admiration of the learned men assembled at the court of her illustrious brother, Francis I.

As soon as the countess was sufficiently recovered from her *accouchement,* the infant princess was privately baptized in the chapel attached to the castle of Angoulême; she received the name of Marguerite, after her maternal grandmother, Marguerite de Bourbon, Countess of Bresse. The ceremony was performed with scarce the semblance of regal pomp; and no gorgeous procession of courtiers and mitred prelates attended the little princess to the font at her solemn reception into the bosom of that church whose errors ere long her enlightened spirit detected, when she became the protectress of those zealous but persecuted reformers of religion to whom the world is chiefly indebted for the diffusion of knowledge, and for the blessings of civil and religious freedom.

Yet Marguerite, whose birth excited so little interest at the court of her royal kinsman, King Charles VIII., was a princess of right regal descent. Her father, Charles d'Orléans, Count d'Angoulême, descended in direct line from Charles V., and though his chance of succession to the throne of France was remote, he was the undoubted heir to the crown, in the double event of failure of male issue to the king, and to the presumptive heir of France, Louis, Duke of Orleans. The king, Charles VIII., had just attained his twenty-third year; and had espoused, in the month of December, 1491, Anne, Duchess of Bretagne. In October, 1492, when Marguerite was six months old, Anne gave birth to a dauphin at the royal castle of Plessis-les-Tours.[1] This event, of course, rendered the ultimate accession of the Count d'Angoulême to regal dignity still more improbable; though, indeed, the king's marriage must have extinguished that ambitious hope in his mind, did it ever exist.

Louis, Duke of Orleans, was the husband of the king's sister, Jane of France, daughter of Louis XI. His union with this

[1] Éloges des Enfans de France, par le P. Hilarion de Coste.

princess had been a compulsory one, contracted by the express command of her father, whose threats Louis had learned by experience were not to be despised. The marriage, consequently, had been unhappy. The duke, gay, gallant, chivalrous, and the *beau idéal* of a *preux chevalier*, turned with indifference from the meek virtues of his childless consort. Yet Jane's exemplary patience, her devotion to him in all things, and the unselfishness which she had displayed thoughout their ill-assorted union, commanded the duke's respect and admiration, even if it failed to inspire him with warmer sentiments.

The Duchess Jane, therefore, passed her time in retirement, almost as unbroken as that of Marguerite's parents, in her husband's ancestral castle of Blois; while the Duke of Orleans, whose attachment to the beautiful young queen, before she became the consort of his sovereign, had been notorious, spent his days in assiduous homage at court, where his graceful person and versatile talents insured him a high degree of royal favour.

Louis, however, does not seem to have exercised the influence which he at this period possessed with Queen Anne and her husband, to restore his cousin, the Count d'Angoulême, to the good graces of the king. This was an act of kindness doubly incumbent, it would seem, on the duke; as the count's disfavour at court arose from the active share which he took in Louis's rebellious defiance of the authority of Anne de France, Dame de Beaujeu, eldest sister of Charles VIII., who, under her father's will, assumed, in 1483, the government of the kingdom during her brother's minority, despite of the superior claims of the Duke of Orleans to the regency, as first prince of the blood, and heir presumptive to the crown.

About the year of King Charles's union with Anne de Bretagne, the Count d'Angoulême had made proposals for the hand of Louisa,[1] daughter of Philip, Duke of Savoy, — it was thought with the intent of conciliating the favour of the Duchess of Beaujeu, as Philip, when Count of Bresse, had espoused Marguerite, sister of the Duke de Beaujeu. It was not a brilliant alliance for Louisa of Savoy; her proposed bridegroom, moreover, had reached the age of thirty-five, whilst she had just entered her fifteenth year. Nevertheless, the matrimonial offer of the

[1] Guichenon, Hist. de la Royale Maison de Savoie.

Count d'Angoulême was accepted by her father, and sanctioned by her powerful uncle, Pierre de Beaujeu, then, by the decease of his elder brother, Duke de Bourbon.

Many reasons induced the young Louisa, who, as the eldest daughter of the Duke of Savoy, might have aspired to a more elevated alliance, to bestow her hand on the Count d'Angoulême. When Louisa had attained her seventh year, her mother, Marguerite de Bourbon, died, leaving her, and her brother Philibert, in most forlorn condition, at the castle of Pont Dains, in the county of Bresse. The decease of the Countess Marguerite happened in 1483, about six months before her husband, Philip, succeeded to the duchy of Savoy, by the premature death of his nephew, Philibert I. During these six months Louisa and her brother lived totally neglected by their father; but, on his accession to sovereign dignity, Philip contracted a second alliance with the princess Claude of Penthièvre; and sending for his children from the castle of Pont Dains, he committed them to the care of his new consort.

When a child, Louisa displayed symptoms of the hereditary malady that had proved so fatal to her mother, and which eventually consigned her brother Philibert to a premature grave. The Countess Marguerite died of lingering decline,[1] — a malady afterwards so fatally developed in the family of her grandson, Francis I.

Louisa, at the time of her marriage with Charles d'Angoulême, was distinguished for great personal attractions. A mere child in years, she yet exhibited in a striking degree the dawn of that magnanimity of soul, and uncommon energy and penetration, which perpetuated her influence over the minds of her two children, Francis and Marguerite. She was accomplished above the ladies of the age in which she lived; and she knew no rival in France to this, her proud superiority, until she voluntarily yielded the palm of learning to her own daughter Marguerite, whose education she undertook and achieved. Louisa was affable and conciliating in her manners; yet the consciousness of mental power and superiority gave to her deportment an aspect so dignified and imposing as to inspire feelings of profound homage. Even her august son Francis, when at the summit of

[1] Mémoires de Jean de Troye, p. 438; Guichenon, Hist. de la Maison de Savoie.

glory and prosperity, seldom presumed to address his mother covered; but, like the rest of the courtiers, he stood cap in hand while in her presence. But if endowments so rare and brilliant commanded the admiration of the age, there were shades in Louisa's character, dark blots hereafter to be revealed, passions vehement and uncontrolled, as startling and extraordinary in their development as were the great and noble qualities of her mind. Louisa, in short, was one of those women of rare intellectual genius who ordinarily become, when placed in supreme power, the blessing or the scourge of their age. The mother of Francis I. was neither; hence her influence throughout her career, unbounded as it seemed, having been negatived by events over which she had no control, historians in general have refrained from honouring her memory by extravagant eulogium, or from dooming her by their censure to universal reprobation.

The Duke of Savoy gave his daughter the moderate sum of thirty-five thousand livres as a marriage portion; although her mother, Marguerite de Bourbon, brought the large dowry of 180,000 crowns. The Count d'Angoulême, on his side, assigned as dower lands for his bride a part of his domains of Cognac, and Romorantin.[1] Louisa was likewise, in the event of her widowhood, to retain possession of the castles of Cognac and Romorantin, so that she might select the residence she liked best for her future abode.

A fervent attachment seems to have subsisted, from the first moments of their union, between the Count d'Angoulême and his youthful wife. Notwithstanding the disparity of years, and the almost utter seclusion in which they lived, Louisa was devoted to her husband; and we are told that throughout the period of their union not the slightest cloud darkened their domestic felicity.[2]

Louisa readily conformed to her husband's taste for retirement. She was still in her girlhood at the time of her marriage, and his love then sufficed her. The tenor of her subsequent life, however, indicates that this compliance was not the result of any

[1] Guichenon, Hist. de Savoie. King Charles, in token of his approbation of this alliance, redeemed one of the estates of the Count d'Angoulême, of the yearly value of 20,000 livres, which was mortgaged to the Duke de Nemours.

[2] St. Gelais, Hist. de Louis XII.

natural inclination for habits of seclusion. The latent powers of her vigorous mind were at this period undeveloped; but varied must have been the mental exercises by which she qualified herself to perform, with such signal success and ability, the arduous labours so soon to devolve upon her.

The auspicious event of the birth of the first dauphin, eldest son of Charles VIII., and of Queen Anne de Bretagne, instead of effecting a reconciliation in the royal family, produced no outward change in the circumstances of Marguerite's parents. The ceremony of the baptism of the royal heir of France, who received the chivalrous name of Charles Orlando, was celebrated with great pomp in the royal chapel, at Plessis-les-Tours, on the thirteenth day of October, 1492.[1] The Count and Countess d'Angoulême were not present at this state solemnity; and it is more than probable that they were not asked to grace the court by their presence. Louisa was prudent enough not to manifest open resentment for this and many similar slights which she and her husband were in the habit of receiving at this time from Charles and his courtiers; but the countess did not forget.

The next two years of Marguerite's babyhood were spent by her parents in their favourite retirement at Angoulême. The count, not having been summoned by King Charles to join in the military expedition into Italy, for the conquest of the kingdom of Naples, Louisa suffered no painful separation from her husband.

About the commencement of the year 1494 Louisa and her husband quitted Angoulême, and took up their abode at Cognac, where, on the 12th of September of the same year, the countess gave birth to her renowned son Francis,[2] whose reign forms one of the most glorious epochs of the French monarchy. We find a curious entry of the birth of her idolized son in the notes of the remarkable events of her life which Louisa composed after the accession of Francis to the throne. In these brief memoirs, Louisa states it to be her intention to note several remarkable things, "but more particularly the dangerous accident which happened to the king, my son, in the year 1501, close to the house of one Sauvage, near to the castle of Amboise." If the countess had adhered to her intention to chronicle the events in

[1] Eloges des Enfans de France, par le P. Hilarion de Coste.
[2] Ste. Marthe, Hist. Généalog. de la Maison Royale de France.

which she played so conspicuous a part, her memoirs might have formed the most interesting and important record of the age; but instead of bequeathing so invaluable a document to the biographers of herself and her children, Louisa's work is but a mere fragmentary sketch, more curious from its quaintness of style than valuable for the elucidation of the history of these times.

Louisa records her son's birth in strains even more triumphant than those which she used when noting that of her little daughter. The extract is in the countess's own words, as it would lose much of its originality by translation: —

François, par la grâce de Dieu, Roi de France, et mon Cesar Pacifique, print la première expérience de lumière mondaine à Cognac environ le 10 heures après midi 1494, le douzième jour le Septembre.[1]

Marguerite was two years and five months old when her brother was born. As she stood with her youthful mother by the cradle of the infant Francis, perhaps that passionate sisterly affection awoke which later became the one absorbing sentiment of her life.

Louisa was a devoted mother; and at this time her fondness for her two beautiful children rendered her careless of the neglect which she and her husband met with from their royal relatives. Yet the birth of her son roused the latent ambition of Louisa's soul. To secure his advancement in life, and pre-eminence in dignity, became the objects absorbing her energies; and from his earliest infancy she devoted the powers of her mind rather to fit her son to adorn and grace that lofty station her ambition aspired to, than to strengthen his principles and to teach him to love and to practise that which is good. But, at the period of the birth of Francis, never did the throne seem less likely to become the heritage of a prince of the line of Angoulême. The Duke of Orleans, it was true, remained still childless; but the succession had been strengthened in the direct line by the birth of a second prince, born two days before Louisa's own *accouchement*.[2] But the death of this young prince, who only survived his birth a few weeks, and the decease of the dauphin, an event more important still for the prospects of Louisa's son, which happened at the castle of Amboise, on the 6th of December of the following

[1] Journal de Louise de Savoie.

[2] Éloges des Enfans de France, par le P. Hilarion de Coste.

year, 1495, again placed the Count d'Angoulême in the rank of second prince of the blood.

If Louisa felt exultation at a disaster mourned throughout France, and bewailed with bitter grief by Queen Anne and her royal spouse, a calamity impended over her own head, fraught with anguish so severe as to quench even the promptings of ambition in her breast. This misfortune was the sudden illness and death of her husband, who expired at Châteauneuf, on the 1st of January, 1496.

The Count d'Angoulême, it appears, on receiving intelligence of the decease of the young dauphin, set off hastily from Cognac, accompanied by Louisa, to visit the Duke of Orleans at Blois, to congratulate him on recovering the position of heir presumptive of France.[1] This ill-advised *empressement* was little calculated to propitiate the court, and especially Queen Anne, who had even dismissed the Duke of Orleans from Amboise, because, hoping to divert the king from his melancholy, Louis had danced and laughed gayly in the royal presence, which the queen construed into an insulting display of joy at the decease of her son. The day upon which Louisa and her husband quitted Cognac was bitterly cold, and in consequence of the severity of the weather they journeyed only as far as Châteauneuf, intending to proceed on the morrow. During the night the count became indisposed; his illness rapidly increased, so that Louisa, in alarm, despatched messengers to summon the physicians and practitioners of the healing art in the neighbourhood. Two famous physicians, named Antoine de Lizaine, and Maître Raoul de Poictiers, obeyed her mandate; and so indefatigable did Louisa's envoys prove themselves, that three more doctors hastened to the assistance of the count. After a long consultation, the five learned professors of medicine pronounced the count's malady to be intermittent fever, accompanied by symptoms of a very aggravated nature, which in their opinion rendered his recovery hopeless.

The illness of the Count d'Angoulême lasted a month. During this season of suspense Louisa lavished upon him the tenderest care and affection. She seldom quitted her husband's chamber; resting neither night nor day, and attending upon him herself with an assiduity which nothing could daunt. When all hope of the count's recovery ceased, Louisa abandoned herself to a

[1] St. Gelais, Hist. de Louis XII.

grief which rejected consolation. It was in vain that her children were brought to her, and that Marguerite with infantine caresses tried to kiss the tears from her cheeks. Louisa's haughty spirit for once — and for only this once in her life — was thoroughly broken. It is related that, for several days previous to the count's decease, she refused to quit his side, even to take needful refreshment; and when all was over, so vehement was her despair that she was lifted fainting from the bed, and carried to her own apartment.[1] For many weeks afterwards the countess was unable to quit her chamber; broken-hearted, and suffering from bodily illness, she joyfully submitted to the custom which consigned royal widows to hold their mourning state in strict seclusion for the space of forty days.

Louisa was twenty years old when she became a widow. Her daughter Marguerite had not attained her fourth year; while the infant Francis had just completed his fifteenth month. Young, beautiful, and highly gifted, Louisa's position was one of extreme difficulty: her actions were liable to misrepresentation; while she had little support to hope for from the protection of a court which, even during her husband's lifetime, had treated her with neglect. It seemed, indeed, as if some adverse destiny existed to hinder the re-establishment of cordial amity between King Charles VIII. and his royal cousins of Angoulême; for Louis, Duke of Orleans, upon whom the guardianship of the youthful Francis and his sister devolved, and whose influence, doubtless, would then have been exerted to restore his ward to the good graces of the sovereign, was now in his turn banished from court.

The Countess d'Angoulême, however, was able to contend with the responsibilities of her position. Friendless, and comparatively forsaken as were her children, she felt herself capable of compensating to them, by her affection and care for this, and for every other deficiency of fortune or accident. Brave of heart, and strong in the consciousness of duty, Louisa recoiled not from her destiny. Thenceforth her children became her idols; they were the joy and consolation of her widowhood; while through them alone could the ambition be gratified which reigned in her bosom. Marguerite and Francis, her two cherished children, must not only repay her tender affection, but their renown,

[1] St. Gelais, Hist. de Louis XII.

their glory, should likewise reflect on herself. Francis, the most accomplished of scholars, the most refined of gentlemen, and graceful of cavaliers; Marguerite, with her touching grace, her beauty of feature, and her singular aptitude for learning, — should each of them hereafter become fitting models for a nation's homage, and bear signal testimony of the extent of her genius, and the depth of her maternal love and care.

After the expiration of the allotted period of her seclusion from the world, the widowed Countess d'Angoulême retired to her dower castle of Romorantin, and commenced the work she had so much at heart, — the education of her children. The remaining portion of the year 1496, and the whole of the following twelve months, she spent in unbroken retirement: her name appears in none of the recorded festivities of the court; and every memoir and chronicle is silent during this period upon the proceedings of the Countess Louisa.

On the sixth of April, 1498, King Charles VIII., whose health had been for some time declining, expired suddenly at the castle of Amboise, struck by a fit of apoplexy.[1] The king left no issue: he was succeeded by his cousin, the Duke of Orleans, who assumed the title of Louis XII.

Thus, five days before she had completed her sixth year, Marguerite hailed her young brother Francis by the proud titles of first prince of the blood, and heir presumptive of France.

[1] Mémoires de Commines.

CHAPTER II.

MARGUERITE meanwhile, at the early age of six years, displayed a remarkable precocity of intellect, which confirmed her mother's proudest hopes.

The care of her son's paternal inheritance having now devolved upon the Countess d'Angoulême, she found that her time was too occupied to permit her to devote herself exclusively to the education of her daughter; she therefore resolved to secure the aid of a lady whose learning and rank rendered her suitable as a friend and governess for the youthful princess. Louisa's attentions were no sooner published than multitudes of noble ladies proffered her their services; for the office of first lady and governess to the sister of the heir presumptive of France was a post of distinction which all were eager to obtain.

It must have afforded entertainment to the royal widow of the Count d'Angoulême, and also have inspired her with no small degree of contempt for the time-serving courtiers, who to please the late king and his sister had so long treated her with neglect, to witness the solicitude with which the office of governess to her daughter Marguerite was sought: noble ladies whose policy it had been to forget that such a personage existed as their eagerly desired pupil, now sought, by all kinds of arts, to propitiate her favour. The countess, however, with her habitual discernment, was not to be won by flattery, or by tardy professions of devotion. Aware how greatly the choice which she was called upon to make must influence Marguerite's character, and, consequently, retard or advance the brilliant career that she designed for both her children, Louisa proceeded warily and deliberately in her election. At length her choice fell on Madame de Châtillon, "a wise and virtuous lady, of unblemished virtue and descent,"[1] whose husband, Jacques de Châtillon, was chamber-

[1] Brantôme, Hommes Illustres, Vie de Jacques de Chastillon.

lain to the king, and had filled the same office at the court of Charles VIII. Madame de Châtillon was the heiress of the princely family of De Chabannes, Counts de Dammartin.[1] Both the countess and her husband possessed great influence at the court of Charles VIII., where Monsieur de Châtillon's favour with the king was recorded in the following lines : —

Chastillon, Bourdillon, et Bonneval
Gouvernent le sang royal.

Louisa, who always scrupulously acted up to her rank and pretensions, wrote to the king to solicit his royal confirmation of the appointment which, awaiting his pleasure, she had bestowed upon Madame de Châtillon.

King Louis, who was then sojourning in his castle at Chinon, immediately signified his hearty consent and approval of Madame de Châtillon, "a lady whom his Majesty considered eminently qualified to fill the arduous duties of preceptress to his cousin, the Princess Marguerite." Louis also took this opportunity to send an invitation to the Countess d'Angoulême and her children to visit him at Chinon.

But, during Louisa's negotiations to provide a fitting preceptress for her daughter, the prospects of the young Francis d'Angoulême were again clouded, and he seemed to have advanced a step nearer to the throne only to render his royal mother's disappointment the keener when it again seemed improbable that he would ascend it.

Louis XII., now master of his own actions, resolved, after twenty-three years of wedlock, upon the divorce of his consort, Jane of France, in order to offer his hand and his throne to Anne de Bretagne, widow of the late King Charles VIII. A project more surprising and distasteful to the Countess d'Angoulême could not have been contemplated.

Anne de Bretagne was born in 1476, and was therefore precisely the same age as the countess herself. She had borne two sons and one daughter to Charles VIII. ; she was as celebrated for her personal attractions as Louisa ; while her influence over Louis would render it necessary to secure the queen's favour to obtain consideration at court. Remonstrances, however, failed to produce the slightest impression on Louis ; the tears of the

[1] Brantôme, Hommes Illustres.

unfortunate Jane were alike unavailing. Within a few weeks after his accession King Louis commenced his suit to the Holy See for the dissolution of his marriage; while, in order to testify his displeasure at the citizens of Paris, who, alone of all the people in the realm, had espoused Jane's cause, and ventured to remonstrate with the king in her behalf, Louis quitted his capital, and spent the first year of his reign either within his own hereditary castle of Blois, or at Chinon.[1]

The unsettled state of affairs in Italy rendering Louis's friendship indispensable to the Pope, Alexander VI. lent a favourable ear to the king's suit; and soon after the arrival of the French ambassador in Rome, he despatched his son, Cæsar Borgia,[2] into France with the desired Bull, empowering three judges, nominated by the king, to pronounce a final decision on the affair of the divorce.

It is difficult to understand how Anne, who throughout her life showed herself so right-principled and magnanimous, could be induced thus to sanction Louis's unmanly persecution of his unoffending consort. Her only apology can be that, perceiving the king's intention to take a new wife was unalterable, Anne, knowing that she was bound by her marriage treaty with King Charles to espouse his successor, in case that monarch left no heirs male to the crown, thought it more prudent to yield an amicable assent to proceedings which she was powerless to arrest, even had her own inclinations opposed Louis's designs.

It was immediately after Queen Anne's departure for Bretagne, and while the proceedings were pending for the dissolution of his marriage, that Louis invited the Countess d'Angoulême to visit him at Chinon. Notwithstanding her displeasure at the king's proceedings, the countess was too politic not to accept his friendly overture. Accordingly, she left Romorantin, accompanied by her children; and it is curious enough that the first time Louisa appeared at court in the reign of Louis XII. she held the highest rank there next to the king. Queen Anne had retired to Nantes. Louis's injured consort awaited the decree of the Papal legates in profound seclusion at Tours;[3] while her sister, the haughty Duchess de Bourbon, was residing in retire-

[1] Mezeray, Abrégé Chronologique.
[2] Brantôme, Hommes Illustres, Vie de Cæsar Borgia.
[3] Vie de Jeanne de Valois, par le P. Pierre de Mareuil.

ment at Moulins, devoting herself to the education of her only child, Suzanne de Bourbon.

The king welcomed his royal relatives with marks of affectionate regard. Louis was especially charmed with Marguerite and her brother. The beauty of the children, and their talents, excited universal admiration; and with proud satisfaction Louisa received the congratulations of the court. "When the king was at Chinon," says the courtly lord of Monlieu, St. Gelais, "Madame d'Angoulême came to visit him, bringing her two children: a son, of the age of four years, named Francis, and a daughter of the age of six years, called Marguerite. My said lord the king received the party benignly and graciously, with honour befitting his nearest relatives on the paternal side. He gave the said lady lodgings in his castle of Chinon, over his own chamber, where he went to visit her frequently in most familiar fashion. As for the children, he (the king) did not know how to show them favour enough; for, had he been their father, he could not have made more of them. And certes, there were few children to equal them in any rank of life; as, for their years, they were so accomplished that it was pleasant and delightsome even to look at them."

Louisa remained the king's guest at Chinon for seven or eight days.[1] So thoroughly, then, had the royal widow and her beautiful children won the king's favour that Louis took them under his immediate protection. Instead, therefore, of allowing the countess to return to her dower palace at Romorantin, he invited her to take up her abode in his castle of Blois, in order, as Louis flatteringly observed, "that her children might be reared and educated at the same palace in which he had spent his earliest years."[2]

The Countess d'Angoulême joyfully assented to a proposal so flattering to her maternal pride, and advantageous to her son's interests in a pecuniary sense; for the young count's patrimony was heavily mortgaged. On the king's marriage, however, with Queen Anne, in January, 1499, Louisa and her children, at the king's desire, quitted Blois, after a residence of six months there, and removed to the castle of Amboise,[3] which Louis assigned to the countess as a permanent residence.

Perhaps it was owing to Queen Anne's influence that Louis

[1] St. Gelais, Histoire de Louis XII. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid.

withdrew from the countess his personal protection, and required her to quit the palace of Blois after having expressed the gracious wish that Marguerite and Francis should pass their infancy where he had spent his own. Louisa was not a woman likely to submit without resentment to the slight implied by this unexpected resumption of the royal grace bestowed upon her at Chinon. If, therefore, it was inflicted at Queen Anne's instigation, it explains in some measure the sudden and unaccountable coldness which at once sprang up between these two princesses, immediately on the queen's return.

The character of these royal ladies, and the jealousies resulting from their respective positions in the kingdom, were causes certain to provoke unmeasured hostility between them. The temper of Queen Anne was as imperious as that of Louisa, whose hatred of the queen soon surpassed the enmity borne towards herself by that princess. The queen, from her lofty elevation, could afford occasionally to be generous and forgiving towards her rival; but Anne's slights, which Louisa dared not resent, often irritated the haughty countess beyond endurance. Anne was much the better woman of the two; pure-minded, honourable, and really devout, she scrupulously fulfilled her duties. She was a devoted wife, a beneficent sovereign, and a true-hearted and steadfast friend. Louisa, on the contrary, suffered the imperiousness of her temper to pervade, and, in some degree, to model every action of her life. Her conduct as a wife had likewise been perfect; her devotion to her children France witnessed with admiration; but her love was exacting; it demanded perfect exclusion from any corresponding sentiment. Louisa's passions, whether of love or of hate, were immoderate, though under perfect outward control: she knew no medium between cordial friendship or avowed hostility. She loved admiration; and, though the countess declared it to be her resolution never to marry again, she gathered around her, to the indignation of Queen Anne, a brilliant circle of the gayest and most profligate nobles, whose homage Louisa condescended to encourage and accept.

In learning and mental culture, Queen Anne and the Countess d'Angoulême rose above the standard of their day; both were highly gifted women. The queen exhibited signal talents for government; but the masculine and vigorous genius of Louisa,

when her day of power arrived, enabled her to surpass her rival's achievements in politics. In personal charms, however, the queen stood unrivalled, even by Louisa's attractions; though, still, Anne's slight constitutional lameness compensated somewhat to the countess for this superiority, as the queen's deportment wanted the majesty so conspicuous in her own.

It would be foreign to the plan and subject of this biography, to detail at length the fierce and vexatious disputes which soon arose between Queen Anne and the Countess d'Angoulême, relative to the affiancing of the daughter that the queen gave birth to during the first year of her union with Louis to the youthful Francis, — a marriage Louisa and the king ardently desired, and Anne as obstinately opposed, — or the quarrel of these two royal ladies, to which Pierre de Rohan, Marshal de Gié, fell a victim; as they are events that had no influence on Marguerite's destiny, except, doubtless, a moral one, which we are unable to trace.

King Louis appointed the Marshal de Gié to be castellan of Amboise, and governor of the young Count d'Angoulême, whom he regarded with paternal favour. He moreover selected for him companions from amongst the sons of his principal courtiers. These young nobles the king sent to be educated at Amboise with Francis: they were entitled "pages d'honneur de Monseigneur d'Angoulême." Amongst these youthful playmates of Francis were the king's nephew, Gaston de Foix, the hero of Ravenna; Henri d'Albret, the heir of Navarre; Charles de Montpensier, better known as the unfortunate Constable de Bourbon; Anne de Montmorency, also future constable of France; Philippe Chabot, Sieur de Brion, afterwards Admiral of France; and Monchenu, who became eventually first maître d'hôtel to Francis.

The young Marguerite d'Angoulême was the reigning divinity of this chivalrous band: her smile was eagerly sought by all; she presided at their games, and her fair hands placed the crown upon the victor's brow. Idolized by her brother, Marguerite, the object of the profound homage and devotion of his friends, reigned despotically as a queen over the brilliant, but youthful circle at Amboise. The young cavaliers whom she most distinguished by her favour were Anne de Montmorency and Charles, Count de Montpensier, a prince of the royal house of Bourbon, and a near relative of her mother.

Anne de Montmorency was the most assiduous aspirant for Marguerite's favour and patronage. She became his devoted friend; and to her constant protection he owed his unexampled rise in arms. The mass of Marguerite's correspondence is addressed to Montmorency. His attachment to the sister of his future sovereign however, never passed the bounds of that respect which was her due: it was frankly responded to by Marguerite; who, in bestowing her friendship, overlooked in her admiration of Montmorency's bold and chivalrous bearing, the numerous defects which sullied his character. In this, however, as in many of her friendships, Marguerite was destined to be cruelly undeceived.

Charles, Count de Montpensier, was the only son of Gilbert de Bourbon, viceroy of Naples under king Charles VIII., by his consort Clara, a princess of the house of Gonzaga. He was, consequently, cousin once removed to Marguerite's mother, the Countess Louisa.[1] Bold, valorous, and impetuous, Charles's martial ardour often betrayed him into faults, which it required the utmost effort on his part to retrieve. He united the great qualities and defects of an elevated but ill-regulated mind. His prodigality and love of magnificence speedily exhausted his slender patrimony, which, as a cadet of the house of Bourbon, sufficed not to enable him to make a suitable figure at court. Rash, dissipated, and profuse, Charles's martial genius and handsome person, despite these defects, procured him many warm friends. Dazzled by the versatility of his talents, they overlooked the absence of firm principle and unswerving rectitude of conduct, in their admiration of the gallant and accomplished cavalier.

Some writers have unguardedly adopted the story that a mutual attachment subsisted between Marguerite and her cousin, the Count de Montpensier. Nothing, however, can be further from probability than this supposition. In 1503, when Marguerite was a child eleven years old, the decease of Pierre, duke de Bourbon Beaujeu, enabled the Count de Montpensier, as the male representative of the house of Bourbon, to contest the vast inheritance of his family with Suzanne, only daughter and heiress of the duke. Suzanne de Bourbon had been affianced to Charles, duke d'Alençon, second prince of the blood; but King Louis,

[1] Sainte Marthe, Hist. Généalog. de la Royale Maison de France.

anxious to terminate the impending suit, ordained that this contract with the Duke d'Alençon should be considered void,[1] so that the princess Suzanne might bestow her hand on her cousin, Charles de Montpensier. The king at the same time renounced, for himself and his successors, any claim which the crown possessed over the lands of Bourbon, in accordance with the will of Louis II., Duke de Bourbon and Auvergne, who died in 1410. In that document, Duke Louis II. ordained that his immense possessions should be inherited alone by his heirs male, and their descendants in direct line of succession. He willed that the females of his house should be deemed incompetent to inherit the fiefs of Bourbon; and that in case of failure of male issue to his descendants, the whole of his possessions should revert to the crown.[2] The duke's son, John I., confirmed this disposition; as did also the great-grandson of Louis II., Peter de Beaujeu, on his accession to the duchy of Bourbon.

Eventually, however, Pierre repented of having made this recognition of the rights of his cousin Gilbert, father of Charles de Montpensier. He therefore obtained from Louis XII., at the persuasion of his consort, Anne de France, a kind of abrogation of the will of Duke Louis II., — a document in which the king consented to acknowledge Peter's only daughter, Suzanne, as heiress of Bourbon, in preference to the claims of Charles, the undoubted male representative of the family.

To establish his rights to this mighty inheritance of Bourbon was the absorbing subject of Charles's ambitious mind, rather than the paying of lover-like court to a girl eleven years old; nor is it probable that, at this tender age, Marguerite could have formed any attachment for the Count de Montpensier, such as is erroneously attributed to her by the author[3] of the "Histoire de Marguerite de Valois, Sœur de François I.," a life of this princess, which was printed at Paris in 1696. That book first mentions this romantic story, whence it has been eagerly copied, without

[1] It was stipulated that the sum of 100,000 livres should be paid to the Duke d'Alençon, as an indemnity of the rupture of the contract which assigned to him in marriage one of the richest heiresses in Europe.

[2] Gailliard, Hist. de François I.

[3] Charlotte Rose Caumont de la Force. "This history," says the learned Bayle (see article Navarre — Dictionnaire Historique), "I need not warn the reader, is, from beginning to end, an embroidery of fictions and romantic absurdities, wrought upon the slightest historical grounds."

reference to probability or dates, by historians who have unfortunately sacrificed historical truth for the sake of striking and dramatic incident.

The marriage of Charles de Montpensier with his cousin Suzanne was solemnized in 1505,[1] when Marguerite had just attained her thirteenth year. The marriage contract was signed by the king, and the Duke d'Alençon, to whom Suzanne had been previously affianced by the Cardinal D'Armagnac; the signatures, likewise, of twenty nobles and prelates were attached. To give the document greater legal force, it was also signed and sealed by all the most celebrated jurisconsults in the kingdom.[2] In the contract, Charles was acknowledged rightful heir of the duchies and appanages of Bourbon, and accordingly assumed the title of Duke de Bourbon; and the bride and bridegroom, in case of the decease of either, mutually made a full donation of their possessions to the survivor.[3]

Contemporary documents do not give us the least reason to suppose that the princess Marguerite was painfully affected by her cousin's marriage. Probably, at this early period of her life, the studies requisite for the elaborate education which it was the will of Louisa of Savoy to bestow upon her daughter monopolized too much of Marguerite's time to allow her leisure to give more than a passing thought to Charles's bridal. If, at this time, however, Marguerite distinguished any of her brother's companions, that honour was certainly bestowed on Montmorency. Her correspondence, as will hereafter be seen, proves this fact; while, throughout the mass of Marguerite's letters which have been preserved, in not one of them does she even remotely allude to the Duke de Bourbon.

About the period when Marguerite was little more than ten years old, Louis tried to negotiate an alliance for her with the young heir of England, Prince Henry. The King of England, Henry VII., had just lost his elder son, Arthur, the husband of Catherine of Arragon, daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain. Louis despatched a gentleman of his chamber, the Count d'Entremont, to London, to condole with Henry upon this affliction; and at the same time to propose to him a matrimonial alli-

[1] Ste. Marthe, Hist. Généalog. de la Maison Royale de France.
[2] Mezeray.
[3] Ibid.; Ste. Marthe, Hist. Généalog., vie de Suzanne, Duchesse de Bourbon.

ance with France, by the betrothal of his son Henry, then Prince of Wales, with Marguerite, sister of the Count d'Angoulême. The ambassador d'Entremont, when opening his mission in presence of King Henry, observed that his master bade him say, "that although it became not a lady to make the first overtures of marriage, nor for her relatives so to do, yet that King Louis, out of regard for the King of England, and for his cousin Marguerite, had been pleased so to act." King Henry courteously declined to give an immediate reply to the proposal; but promised to despatch an ambassador into France to confer on the subject.

The truth was, that Henry VII., a wary and covetous prince, was sadly embarrassed how to reply. He did not wish to offend Louis, and would gladly have accepted the proposal had Marguerite been the daughter of the king; but neither her rank then nor her dowry appeared to him sufficient to entitle her to an alliance with the Prince of Wales. Henry, moreover, was revolving the possibility of obtaining a Papal dispensation to marry Prince Henry to his brother's widow, in order to retain possession of the rich dowry, in money and jewels, which the infanta Catherine brought with her from Spain.

The share which the Countess d'Angoulême bore in this negotiation is nowhere detailed. Probably the project received her warmest approval; for the prospect of placing her daughter on the throne of England must have been gratifying to her maternal pride and ambition. The court was making a brief sojourn at Grenoble when the English ambassador, Matthew Bacquier, equerry to the King of England, arrived. On the following day, June 25, Bacquier was admitted to audience by the cardinal George d'Amboise, legate and prime minister of France. Bacquier first presented the thanks of his sovereign for the condolence on his recent affliction, which Louis sent him by the Sieur d'Entremont. The proposed marriage between Marguerite and the Prince of Wales was then alluded to, in the following terms: "Afterwards M. l'Escuyer explained to Monseigneur le Légat how that the king his master had heard from the ambassador of his good brother and cousin the commission confided to the latter, to propose alliance between M. le Prince de Galles and the sister of the Count d'Angoulême; and how the said ambassador declared, that although it did not

become a lady to make the first overtures of marriage, yet that the king his master had resolved so to do." The cardinal here hastily interposed, saying, "It is quite true, M. l'Escuyer, that I was the first to propose the match, because the king my master loves the princess as his own child, and for this reason the king condescended to waive ceremony." Bacquier then explained to the cardinal the calculations which the English monarch and his council had made, relative to the circumstances of the princess Marguerite, and the advantages, or rather disadvantages, her alliance was likely to bring. "Monsieur l'Escuyer then stated to M. le Légat, that doubtless this proposal of marriage was an honourable one for the Prince of Wales, especially as the count, brother of the princess, might by chance succeed to the crown of France. Nevertheless, it appeared probable to the king his master, and to my lords of his council, that the King of France, his good brother and cousin, and the queen his consort, being yet young, might still have a numerous progeny, both of sons and daughters, which the king his master hoped and desired above all things; it therefore appears to the said noble personages, that the proposal made by the King of France, is neither suitable nor to be desired; although, had the said lady been the daughter of King Louis, the king his master would have accepted the offer with joy. Since the departure of the said equerry Entremont, the king had received several overtures of marriage for his son, from the ambassadors of Spain and Hungary, but before making any reply, he wished to express to King Louis his profound regrets, and to thank him for the very courteous proposal he had made him." When the English ambassador concluded his detail of the interested motives which induced King Henry and his sapient counsellors to refuse the fair princess offered to them, Cardinal D'Amboise replied, "Mons. l'Escuyer, we are sensible that this alliance seems at present scarcely sufficient for M. le prince to contract; nevertheless, this offer, the most august which my master has it now in his power to make, will entertain and strengthen the friendship fortunately subsisting between our respective sovereigns. I assure you that had the king my master another daughter, besides her[1] whom he has recently affianced to M. l'Archiduc, there is no prince in the world with whom he would sooner contract alliance than with

[1] The Princess Claude de France.

your king. Should it be the pleasure of God to give him more daughters and sons, your master will have the preference before any living prince."

Bacquier was then ushered into the presence of Louis: he repeated the same complimentary acknowledgment for the condolence that the King of France sent his master, as he had done in the presence of the legate. He next thanked Louis for the honour he had conferred upon the Prince of Wales, in proposing to bestow upon him a princess of his royal house; a favour the more to be prized, inasmuch, to repeat the words used by the ambassador D'Entremont, "that although it became not a lady to make such an overture, yet King Louis, out of regard for the King of England, and love for his cousin Marguerite, had so done." Louis somewhat sarcastically replied, having been apprized by his minister of the rejection of the proposal, "Ma foi, what you state, Mons. l'Escuyer, is perfect truth; for I love the Princess Marguerite with all my heart, and as dearly as if she were my own child. Nevertheless, should God give me other daughters, I will take care that the king your master, and my good brother and cousin, receives the earliest notification of that event." The English ambassador was then dismissed from the presence of Louis, and conducted to the queen's apartments, where Anne sat in state to receive him. Bacquier again repeated Henry's excuses for declining Marguerite's alliance for his son. The reasons which the wary king assigned were particularly acceptable to Queen Anne, who cherished the greatest desire to become the mother of a dauphin. She therefore responded with much complacency, that, "although she loved the Princess Marguerite as a daughter, she wished with all her heart that she had a child of her own, to bestow upon the son of her '*bon père*,' the King of England."

The ambassador then, by the command of Louis, was entertained at a banquet. The Marshal de Gié, Governor of Amboise, happened to be present, and in discoursing of the proposed alliance with Bacquier, which he knew his royal master desired, the marshal greatly lauded Marguerite and her brother. He declared that Mademoiselle d'Angoulême was "*très belle, et bien sage de son age.*"[1]

[1] MSS. Cotton. Calig. D. vi. Breq. n. 85. This document is published also in "Lettres des Rois, Reines et autres personnages des Cours de France et d'Angleterre," edited by M. Champollion Figeac.

Meanwhile the true reason of Henry's refusal to accept the hand of Marguerite for his son became apparent by the betrothal of the Prince of Wales to his brother's widow, Catherine of Arragon, whose rich dowry the king could not prevail upon himself to relinquish. Much misery was probably averted from Marguerite by the failure of this scheme to betroth her to the heir of England: it was afterwards, nevertheless, a subject of deep regret to her royal brother Francis, and also, at one time, to Henry VIII., that this design had not been accomplished.

Marguerite meantime was making astonishing progress in learning. Her aptitude and keenness of comprehension, we are told, astonished the most learned professors of science and belles lettres, who were proud of calling Marguerite their pupil. She had made considerable progress, at this period, in the Italian, Spanish, and Latin languages, in philosophy and divinity, under the tuition of her learned preceptor Robert Hurault, archdeacon and abbot of St. Martin d'Autun. She spoke and wrote her tongue with ease and elegance. Some of her earlier poems attest, also, great mental ability and quickness of thought. Knowledge was as necessary to Marguerite's mind as sustenance to her body. Her love of learning was innate; and she applied herself to its attainment with enthusiasm. No science proved too abstruse to daunt her eager desire to comprehend its mysteries; nor did she disdain to acquire a knowledge of things which must have appeared trivial to her mind. "She was a princess of enlarged wit," says Brantôme,[1] "being very able, both as to her natural and acquired endowments." Ere long all the learned men of the court of Louis XII. called Marguerite their Mæcenas.[2]

But rare as was the promise of her genius, Marguerite's choicest charm consisted in the beauty of her disposition. To the brilliant qualities which arrest admiration, she united those endearing traits that win on the affections. Sensible, truthful, and modest, Marguerite had been taught, under the guidance of her able preceptress Madame de Châtillon, that the power of doing good, and of becoming the benefactress of the unfortunate, was the highest prerogative of her exalted rank. A character more beautiful and affecting than that of Marguerite presents itself not in history. Thrown, when almost a child, into the

[1] Brantôme, Dames Illustres. [2] Ibid.

midst of a corrupt court, surrounded by every incentive to evil, and none to good, — the purity of her conduct was not less conspicuous than the grace of her deportment.

Marguerite, even at the early age of thirteen, loved to devote herself to the study of theology. In her reverence for holiness, she had been taught by her admirable governess to fear God, its author and source. The Bible as yet was a closed book to her; and from the subtle distinctions and learned disquisitions of the Sorbonne, more venerated then than the word of God, Marguerite vainly sought guidance. But the age of mental darkness had reached its climax: knowledge, and God's truth were about to be revealed; and Marguerite, foremost amongst those enlightened ones of earth who eagerly welcomed the Divine ray of the Gospel that was so soon to irradiate the world, at length obtained the solution of her doubts. Limited as was Marguerite's religious knowledge at this period, we are told, nevertheless,[1] that from the age of thirteen the decorum of her conduct was so conspicuous as plainly to indicate, "by her countenance, her eyes, her deportment, her words, and, in short, by all her actions, that the Spirit of God had been vouchsafed to her."

Queen Anne distinguished Marguerite by frequent marks of royal favour; but the perpetual disputes between the queen and the Countess d'Angoulême prevented the princess from making any long sojourn at court. It is to be doubted, also, whether Marguerite would have willingly profited by the queen's favourable notice. Louisa possessed absolute influence over the minds of her children, and no doubt both Francis and Marguerite warmly resented the queen's hostility towards their mother. Anne's neglect, also, of her brother, and her persevering opposition to his future union with the Princess Claude, between whom and Marguerite a warm friendship existed, were causes of constant irritation, sufficient in themselves to check any affectionate feeling on the part of the princess for the queen.

The most devoted attachment existed between Louisa and her children. To them she had always been good, indulgent, affectionate, and just. She employed her time and her numerous accomplishments for their instruction and amusement. She had been judicious in the choice of their instructors; and by the energy of her character, she won for herself and for them,

[1] Sainte Marthe, Oraison Funèbre de Marguerite, Reine de Navarre.

despite the queen's enmity, a position of high consideration and respect. The same intimate union subsisted at this period between the three as when Cardinal Bibiéna, writing to Rome a year or two after the accession of Francis, called Louisa, Francis, and Marguerite, the Trinity of France; for, adds he, "che scrivere a Luisa di Savoia, era come scrivere alla stessa Trinità."[1]

The early affection which Francis bore towards his mother and sister was confirmed, and rose, as regarded Marguerite, into absolute devotion, when, as he grew up to manhood, his pride was gratified by the homage ever surrounding them. The gentle influence of his accomplished sister doubtless gave to Francis's character that high chivalrous tone, that polished and amiable demeanour, which rendered him the first cavalier of his day. Great and good impulses Marguerite also fostered within her loved brother's bosom; wandering hand in hand together amidst the woods, and the picturesque scenery of Amboise, words of wisdom, such as the princess loved often to meditate upon, formed the theme of her discourse. Counsel, which no one else dare presume to tender to the high-spirited Francis, he listened to with submission when it proceeded from his sister's lips. Both passionately attached to art and to literature, Marguerite's exquisite taste inspired a like refinement in her brother. They composed poetry together, they studied languages; and, amid the deep solitudes of Amboise, they read, they thought, and acquired that knowledge of themselves and of mankind which afterwards rendered the brother and the sister, from their exalted eminence, objects of the admiration of Europe. But yet there was a great and marked superiority on one side, endowed as they both were by many mental gifts. Marguerite's talents, throughout her life, with but one lamentable exception, were sanctified by her piety. Francis lacked ever the grace which religion gives.

Already a circle of illustrious men surrounded Louisa and her children. The future brilliancy of the rising stars of the house of Valois was discerned from afar. From amongst these, Marguerite and her brother selected, and distinguished by especial favour and notice, men whose attainments afterwards shed the brightest lustre on the reign of Francis. In this circle were,

[1] Molini. Docum. inéd.

Guillaume Cop, the renowned physician; François Vatable, whose Hebrew acquirements astonished the most learned of the Rabbis; Guillaume Petit, confessor of Louis XII., and afterwards to Francis, who conferred upon him the bishopric of Troyes and Senlis; and last, though pre-eminent in Marguerite's favour, was the celebrated Étienne Poncher, bishop of Paris, a man who, Erasmus declares, must have been inspired from Heaven to effect the reformation of piety and letters. Francis, on his accession, created this illustrious prelate Archbishop of Sens.[1] From the court of Louis XII. and Anne de Bretagne, thronged with the most beautiful women of France, Francis returned to his mother and sister, in their comparative solitude at Amboise, to pass from the gay, though decorous circle of the queen to the easy *abandon*, and the intellectual delights of the society Louisa and Marguerite loved — no wonder, therefore, if love of letters, gallantry, and valour were the distinguishing traits of Francis's character.

In 1506 Marguerite and her mother set out on another expedition, to visit the king at Plessis-les-Tours. This time, the countess's journey was made in a very triumphant manner; the occasion being no less than to witness the celebration of the marriage of Francis with Louis's daughter, the Princess Claude of France. Anne's scruples had been vanquished, or at least overruled, by the formal intervention of the states-general of the kingdom. Aghast at the queen's ruinous project of affiancing her daughter, the heiress of Bretagne, Milan, and of the patrimonial estates of the house of Orleans, to Charles, son of the Archduke Philip and Joanna of Spain, afterwards the redoutable Emperor Charles V., the states assembled at Tours and implored the king to secure the safety and liberties of his realm by bestowing his eldest daughter on Francis, Duke de Valois, the heir of his crown.[2] Louis promised compliance with the desire of his people; while Anne dared no longer openly oppose the wishes of her husband and of the nation.

At two o'clock on the 22d of May, in the palace of Plessis-les-Tours, Francis and Claude were therefore affianced, to the universal joy of France.[3] Festivals and tournaments, holden in

[1] Gailliard, Hist. de François I.
[2] Mémoires de Fleuranges, p. 291.
[3] Journal de Louise de Savoie.

the royal park of Plessis and elsewhere, signified Louis's sympathy in the contentment of his people. Queen Anne, however, though she had been compelled to yield her will to ensure the national welfare, was not reconciled to her daughter's marriage. She carefully kept the young couple apart, and never permitted her daughter to spend a moment alone with her betrothed or with his mother; and this system she pertinaciously pursued for the remaining eight years of her life.[1] Had a son, that object of Anne's ardent desire, been born to her, there is no doubt that a Papal dispensation would have released the Princess Claude from bonds so distasteful to her royal mother.

As the nation and the Countess d'Angoulême had provided the queen with a son-in-law, soon after this event Anne began to look about for a suitable alliance for the Princess Marguerite, whom she herself resolved to dispose of in marriage. At one time the Archduke Charles of Austria was proposed as a proper spouse for Marguerite; and had this alliance been accomplished, it is impossible to estimate its probable effect on the future reign of Francis. The chief obstacles to this marriage were, the youth of the archduke, who, being born in 1500, was consequently only in his eighth year, while the princess had attained the age of sixteen and the lukewarm assent of Queen Anne to the proposal. The queen cherished to the end of her life the hope of marrying the archduke to one of her own daughters; therefore she lent little countenance to the project of affiancing him to Marguerite.

Amongst the princes of France, of birth sufficiently elevated to aspire to an alliance so august, the Duke d'Alençon held the first rank. He descended from Charles, Duke d'Alençon, youngest brother of Philip VI., and was the grandson of John, fourth duke, attainted and condemned to death as a rebel during the reign of Louis XI.; but whose punishment was commuted into imprisonment. René, Duke d'Alençon, was re-established in his duchy on the decease of Duke John in 1476, by Louis XI., who restored to him the whole of his father's confiscated property. Duke René married Marguerite of Lorraine, daughter of the Count de Vaudemont, and in 1489 the duchess gave birth to her eldest son, Charles.

At the commencement of the year 1509 Louis, therefore,

[1] Brantôme, Dames Illustres; Gailliard.

proposed the Duke d'Alençon to the Countess d'Angoulême, as a suitable husband for her daughter. Louis, whose life was spent in unavailing attempts to reconcile the conflicting claims of the various members of the royal house, was extremely desirous to effect this alliance, in order to terminate a long and vexatious process then pending between the crown and the house of Alençon, relative to the succession of the county of Armagnac. King Louis, who hated litigation, but yet was bound to maintain the rights of the crown, proposed to compromise the affair by bestowing Marguerite in marriage on the Duke D'Alençon; then as a free act of royal bounty to confer upon her the disputed county of Armagnac as a marriage portion.

Charles, Duke d'Alençon, had just entered his twentieth year when his marriage with the Princess Marguerite was proposed. He had been affianced to the Duchess Suzanne de Bourbon; but the contract, as before stated, was annulled by the king's commands, in order that the conflicting claims of Suzanne and her cousin, the Count de Montpensier, to the inheritance of Bourbon, might be adjusted by their union. A more unworthy aspirant than Charles d'Alençon for the hand of the bright and intellectual Marguerite, King Louis could scarcely have selected within his dominions. He was a prince of mean capacity and uncultivated mind, utterly insensible to that enthusiastic love for the great, the beautiful, and the good, so inseparable a part of Marguerite's nature.[1] Naturally dull and slow of comprehension, Charles d'Alençon was reserved and unsocial from habit and inclination. Like all persons of little capacity, he was inexorably bigoted to his own opinions; yet throughout his life he never displayed either courage or ability in asserting them. He was constitutionally of a melancholy and jealous temperament. His ambition led him to solicit perseveringly from Louis XII. and King Francis, offices which he was mentally and physically unfitted to discharge. The Duke d'Alençon had not the smallest credit at court; his handsome person and his illustrious rank were his sole recommendations in Queen Anne's circle.

Marguerite does not seem to have been consulted in this negotiation; the king, the queen, and the Countess d'Angoulême appear to have projected and accomplished the marriage without any reference to her inclinations. Yet the alliance must have

[1] Voltaire, Hist. Universelle; Gailliard, Hist. de François I.

appeared very inferior to Louisa, after the ambitious dreams which the negotiations for the union of Marguerite with the heirs of England and Spain gave rise to in her mind.

Marguerite, however, recoiled at the prospect of this union with a prince of a mind and temper so dissimilar to her own. When Louis congratulated himself on the success of his amiable propensity for peace-making, which had procured the amicable settlement of the two great causes of Bourbon and Armagnac, he probably dreamed not of the future misery to which he was dooming the fair young girl, "whom he loved with all his heart, as dearly as if she were his own child," by imposing upon her, for state purposes, so uncongenial a partner.

At the age of seventeen, Marguerite possessed many personal charms. In figure she was tall and slender, displaying most royal grace in her deportment and gestures. Her eyes were large, and of a deep violet hue. Her complexion was fair, and the colour on her cheeks most delicately fresh. Her hair, which was very long, was of a pale gold colour. According to the unbecoming fashion of the court of Louis XII., Marguerite often wore her hair completely concealed by a coif, or hood of black velvet. She is represented wearing this hood, in the curious miniature engraved for the frontispiece of this volume, — a portrait painted when the princess had attained the age of sixteen or seventeen, and probably just before her marriage with the Duke d'Alençon. The hood is ornamented round the forehead with a crimson band studded with jewels. Marguerite's robe is composed of rich crimson satin. The corsage is cut square, and embroidered round the bosom with gold; her sleeves are loose, and pendent, and bordered by a deep fall of rich lace. Her girdle is narrow, and of a bright green colour. The princess wears a gold chain passed twice round her neck. She is represented sitting on a high seat, — probably an *escabelle*, or stool, covered with gilt leather, an article of furniture much in vogue at the court of Louis XII., — before a chess-board, blazoned with the arms of Orleans. Opposite to her is her brother Francis, with whom she is playing at chess. The costume of the young count is very singular. He wears a habit of pale lavender silk, lined with bright green satin, quilted and confined round the waist by a green girdle. His stockings are scarlet; his cap of crimson velvet is adorned, as is also the hood of the princess, with a sprig of foliage,

probably intended by the artist to represent the *fleur-de-lis.* Immediately behind the princess stands the governor of the young Count d'Angoulême, Artus de Gouffier, Count de Boisy. The count holds a noble white hound by a chain looped round his wrist, while he is watching the progress of the game between his youthful pupils. The colour of the count's cap is scarlet; he wears the collar of the Order of St. Michael; and his robe is dark brown, trimmed with fur. The window in the background of the picture is filled with painted glass; the walls of the apartment are panelled, and the ceiling is of oak divided into compartments, relieved with gilding.

Marguerite's portion, as a daughter of the royal house of Angoulême, amounted to the sum of 60,000 livres Tournois,[1] besides the county of Armagnac, settled upon her by King Louis. This sum, the contract stipulated, was to be paid by instalments. The first portion of his sister's dowry, a sum of 6,000 livres, Francis delivered to the Duke d'Alençon, on the day the marriage contract was signed. A document preserved in the Bibliothèque Royale, signed by Marguerite and Charles, in acknowledgment of an advance of 7,000 livres, made by Francis in liquidation of his sister's dowry in the year 1520, states that no further sums were received by the Duke d'Alençon until the year 1518. On this and on the following year the king paid 40,000 livres; and again, in 1520, Francis made a further advance of 7,000. There still remained on the original sum of 60,000 livres an arrear of 7,000, which probably Marguerite never received, as from the period of the last instalment dates the commencement of the king's ruinous wars.

Queen Anne undertook to defray the expenses attending Marguerite's nuptials with the Duke d'Alençon.[2] The ceremony was performed with great splendour, at Blois, on the 9th of October, 1509, at fifteen minutes past six o'clock in the evening.[3] The officiating prelate was the Cardinal de Nantes. He united the young couple in the presence of the king, the queen, and the assembled court. The king led the bride to and from the altar, and treated her with the most marked distinction and affection. The Countess d'Angoulême, it is recorded, was much

[1] MS. Bibl. Roy. Col. de Titres Scellés.
[2] Mezeray, Vie d'Anne de Bretagne.
[3] Journal de Louise de Savoie.

affected, and could not refrain from shedding tears when she beheld her daughter so honoured by the king. After the ceremony Anne gave a state banquet in honour of Marguerite's nuptials, which was graced by the presence of all the most illustrious ladies in the kingdom. The following day the tournament opened in the grand court of the Castle of Blois. The equipage of the combatants was most sumptuous; and their gallant deeds of arms were witnessed by the ladies of the court, who occupied a gallery to the right of the lists, hung with tapestry. Queen Anne and the young bride sat beneath a canopy of state, and distributed the prizes to the victors. Amongst those who particularly distinguished themselves by their valiant bearing, we find the names of the bridegroom, the Count d'Angoulême, the Duke de Nemours, and the Count de Foix. The king honoured the Duke d'Alençon and the Count d'Angoulême by appearing armed on the lists as their second in the combat.[1]

At the close of the festivities, which lasted four days, Marguerite departed with her husband for Paris, where they sojourned until the arrival of the king. Marguerite immediately visited Louis at the Palace des Tournelles, who received her, we are told, with great demonstrations of regard, and "granted her to the full the petition which she came thither to prefer."[2] The chronicler adds nothing to these last mysterious words, and leaves us without enlightenment on the subject of the suit preferred by the youthful bride.

From the period of her marriage Marguerite emerges from her retirement at Amboise, to enter into the busy scenes of life at the early age of seventeen, as the consort of a prince who neither possessed her affection nor commanded her esteem.

Henceforth the sphere of the Duchess d'Alençon becomes defined. While we occasionally mourn her errors — for Marguerite is not exempt from infirmity — the struggles of her noble and sensitive mind excite the deepest sympathy and admiration. Her path in life was a thorny one: a noble work was given her to perform; and great talents were entrusted to her for its accomplishment. Sometimes she wavers in her course; yet, amidst the corruption and levity of the age, her character shines with a pure radiance, which, though temporarily eclipsed, ever attracts and cheers.

[1] St. Gelais, Hist. de Louis XII. [2] Ibid.

CHAPTER III.

AFTER the celebration of her marriage with the Duke d'Alençon, Marguerite retired with her husband to his castle of Argentan, in Normandy. This separation from her mother and brother was a bitter trial to Marguerite; for the sacrifice was made to follow one who shared neither her love, her sympathies, nor her esteem.

Marguerite's charms, however, seem to have exercised the same fascination over her husband that won her universal popularity with others. Duke Charles, who is described "as a prince without wit, without presence, and as totally unworthy of possessing the most beautiful and witty woman of the age," was not insensible to the numerous mental gifts of his consort. He was proud of her beauty and illustrious rank, and jealous of the ascendency which she exercised over others. He would have possessed Marguerite's sole confidence, and he appears to have secretly chafed at her coldness. The duke, however, knew not how to commend himself to the affection of a high and generous heart like that of Marguerite; and soon his discontent rendered him sullen, and even at times morose and unsociable. Marguerite, therefore, alone in the castle of Argentan, was thrown upon her own resources. She felt deserted and solitary; she pined for her brother's society, for Louisa of Savoy, for the comparative refinements of Paris and the court, and for the delight of that intellectual intercourse with the *savants* of the capital in which she had formerly so eagerly participated.

One consolation, however, still remained to Marguerite; that was the society of her tried and faithful friend, Madame de Châtillon, who now exchanged her title of preceptress to the Princess Marguerite for that of first lady of honour to the Duchess d'Alençon. It doubtless proved a great alleviation of

Marguerite's solitude, to converse with Madame de Châtillon upon past events, and to find in her a ready partaker in her anxieties, as well as in her joy, and pride at the prosperity of her gallant brother, whom Marguerite ever loved with a devotion passionate and exclusive, such as she never bestowed upon another.

The Duke d'Alençon maintained at Argentan a state becoming his dignity and that of his illustrious consort. Argentan is one of the principal towns of the duchy of Alençon, and its castle was picturesquely situated on the banks of the river Orne. Marguerite's abode was surrounded by beautiful landscapes, woods, fields, and vineyards, which, under the paternal rule of the Dukes d'Alençon,[1] teemed with abundant crops. Yet the duchess looked coldly upon this prosperity which she shared with her ungracious spouse. For some time she bore up nobly against the disadvantages of her position: but Marguerite was very young; she was lively and beautiful; and at length she grew impatient at her solitude, and her separation from all she loved best on earth.

Perhaps a timely removal back to the society of Amboise might have checked the evil growing in Marguerite's mind; but until after the death of Queen Anne, there is no record of her having appeared again at court. It might be that with jealous umbrage Duke Charles took alarm at the universal admiration excited by the charms of his young consort; hence, perhaps, arose his desire of keeping Marguerite at a distance from the court, — a design in which he would doubtless be supported by the queen, who greatly lauded conjugal submission; though truth compels the statement that Anne's approbation of this virtue was never exemplified by her own practice and example. Having, therefore, no object to engage her affection, or to afford exercise for her active mind, Marguerite turned in despair to seek refuge from weariness of spirit in the cultivation of the admirable talents with which nature had endowed her. But the blight that had fallen on her happiness impaired the high moral tone of her mind; and that purity of thought and deed which, at the age of

[1] The mother of the Duke d'Alençon, Marguerite of Lorraine, was a princess eminent for her piety and charity. She resided with her son at Argentan during his minority, and was greatly honoured and revered by the vassals and dependants of the duke.

fifteen, seemed to prove to the world "that the spirit of God directed her actions," became obscured. Exiled from the brilliant circles of the court and the capital, the daughter of Louise de Savoie, though absent, still resolved to reign over them as absolutely by the charms of her intellect, as she had before done by her personal graces. Marguerite therefore commenced, when in her nineteenth year, the celebrated series of tales, or *nouvelles*, as they were then termed, which, after her death, were collected by Claude Gruget, and published under the title of "L'Heptameron, ou Recueil des Nouvelles de très-illustre et très-excellente Princesse Marguerite, Reine de Navarre."

To suit the licentious tastes of the age, Marguerite condescended in these tales to do violence to every principle and virtue which then, and always throughout her life, adorned her character. It is lamentable to behold the mental and religious falling away, in the mind of one so gifted with right perceptions, which these tales exhibit. A vague consciousness of the sin and folly of her compliance with the perverted tastes of the corrupt age evidently often stole across the mind of the Duchess d'Alençon. This is forcibly demonstrated in the ingenious method by which the duchess invariably winds up her narratives by moral and religious reflections, and pious warnings against the wickedness she has been so wittily portraying; as if she would by this means tranquillize her conscience and deceive herself into a palliation of the sin she was committing. Almost all the tales inculcate the same moral, — that no man must rely on his own strength to combat human frailty and passion; and, consequently, he ought unceasingly to implore aid from above to subdue himself; "for," says Marguerite, "there is strength alone in God." This habit of referring everything to religion, and its influences on the human heart, shows that Marguerite could not have totally closed her conscience against the promptings of that serious and devout spirit which her subsequent writings attest her to have possessed; else, unless swift and sudden compunction had visited her mind, what can that impulse have been which induced her often, in the midst of some of her most reprehensible recitals, to close the page suddenly and launch into long religious dissertations, often totally irrelevant to the narrative?

Marguerite's colleague in the composition of these *nouvelles*, was Bonaventure Des Perriers, one of her gentlemen ushers.

Des Perriers was a wit, a *savant*, and an atheist; his learning, and a certain amiable *abandon* of manner, recommended him to the favour of his royal mistress. He was likewise the author of a volume of tales of a still more equivocal tendency than those of the Heptameron; and there is little doubt that several of the most profligate narratives in that collection were written by Des Perriers. Many of Marguerite's panegyrists have striven to clear her entirely of all share in the composition of the Heptameron, which they aver was the sole work of her gentleman usher. The tales, it is asserted, were merely related in her presence, and then afterwards written by Des Perriers, who persuaded Marguerite to append her name to the work. This statement, however, will not bear examination by the light of contemporary authorities. The most incontrovertible evidence, however, that Marguerite wrote the majority of the tales in the Heptameron, is afforded by Claude Gruget, who published the collection twelve years after her decease. Gruget dedicated his book to Jane of Navarre, Marguerite's only surviving child; and in his address to that princess at the commencement of the volume, which she graciously accepted, he states in explicit terms that the book was the work of her royal mother. Had there existed any doubt, in 1561, as to whether the Heptameron was the offspring of Marguerite's pen, or of that of Gentleman-usher Des Perriers, Claude Gruget would not have presumed to offer so very equivocal a compilation to Queen Jane of Navarre as the work of her mother; while Jane herself would certainly have gladly availed herself of the doubt, to disavow a book so injurious to her illustrious mother's fame. This evidence in itself seems to be conclusive, and to establish beyond dispute the identity of the author of the Heptameron.

Marguerite's *nouvelles* were received with rapturous applause; their wit, the keenness of their satire, — for they were aimed at existing persons, vices, and abuses, — the flowing, original, and picturesque energy of the style and language, raised their illustrious author to higher fame amongst the learned. Yet, how must the good and pious Bishop of Paris, Étienne Poncher, have mourned the levity of his beloved pupil, and have grieved over the delusion — which it must have been his only consolation to think possessed Marguerite — that such writings could be productive of good by the keenness and point of the moral, enforced after

the minds of her readers had been palled by dwelling on the repulsive incidents unfolded in the narrative.

A great calamity, meanwhile, impended over the nation: this was the death of Queen Anne de Bretagne, who expired at Blois on Monday, January 9th, 1514, at the early age of thirty-six.

Never was princess or queen of France bewailed with such frantic sorrow as Anne de Bretagne.[1] The day of her decease was a day of national mourning. The French were proud of her European renown, of her rigid virtue, of her munificent patronage of art, and of the immense heritage which she brought to the crown. Not even in the pages of the most pitiless defamer of female reputation, is there to be found the slightest accusation or innuendo reflecting on the pure fame and virtue of Queen Anne; not a single disgraceful intrigue in which her name is involved is upon record; her reputation is clear as the day; while the pen, even of the dullest of chroniclers, grows eloquent in her praise.

Queen Anne's funeral obsequies were celebrated with great pomp and regal *appareil.* She was interred at St. Denis, by the Cardinal de Luxembourg, on Wednesday, the 15th of February. The young Duke de Valois attended as chief mourner at the funeral, and walked alone next to the queen's coffin, enveloped in a long black mantle. Then followed the remaining members of the royal family of France, the Duke d'Alençon, leading the Duchess de Bourbon-Beaujeu, and the Duke de Vendôme, and the Countess d'Angoulême.[2] Marguerite was not present at the funeral ceremonies, though she accompanied her husband from Argentan, and was then probably living in retirement at Cognac.[3]

The king, meanwhile, withdrew in a state of distracted sorrow to Vincennes, on the evening of Queen Anne's decease, accompanied by his two daughters.[4] He there shut himself up in a solitary chamber, and refused to be comforted for the loss of his beloved consort. No one approached the king's presence for long afterwards unless habited in the deepest mourning; and this mark of respect for the queen's memory was exacted from foreign

[1] Mémoires du Chevalier Bayard.
[2] Brantôme, Dames Illustres; Vie d'Anne de Bretagne.
[3] Journal de Louise de Savoie.
[4] Vie d'Anne de Bretagne.

ambassadors and from all strangers visiting the court.[1] Every amusement, such as balls, comedies, and festivals, was forbidden at court. The royal receptions were indefinitely suspended; and Louis could scarce command his grief sufficiently to grant those state audiences indispensably requisite.

Queen Anne, by her last will and testament, left the guardianship of her daughters, Claude and Renée, to Louisa of Savoy. The queen also appointed the countess trustee for her daughters, as regarded the personal effects which they inherited from her, and chiefly for the infant princess Renée, whose pecuniary interests were more concerned in this bequest of Anne's than those of her sister Claude, who inherited the duchy of Bretagne.[2]

Great must have been the exultation of the Countess Louisa. Her persevering opponent, Queen Anne, — she who alone possessed superior rank and influence in the realm, was now laid low by the cold hand of death; the king, broken in health and spirit, shunned the world and its pleasures; his daughter, the heiress of Bretagne, Milan, and Orleans, was affianced to her gallant young son. What could Louisa now desire more, except to witness the elevation of Francis to the throne, to conceive herself at the summit of worldly prosperity?

One event, nevertheless, the countess determined to hasten, in accordance with the dictates of that politic caution which ever distinguished her. The decease of Queen Anne removed the sole obstacle to the completion of the marriage of the Duke de Valois with the Princess Claude. Francis, therefore, made urgent suit to the king that the ceremony of his espousals might no longer be delayed. The Princess Claude was now Duchess of Bretagne, by the decease of her royal mother; and thus this important fief, so long as her marriage with the Duke de Valois remained unaccomplished, was virtually severed again from the crown.

King Louis, who had ever promoted this marriage at the expense of great domestic disquietude, readily assented to the duke's demand.

The marriage of Claude and Francis was, therefore, solemnized on the 18th of May, 1514, at St. Germaine en Laye,[3] not quite

[1] Brantôme, Vie d'Anne de Bretagne.
[2] Journal de Louise de Savoie.
[3] Journal de Louise de Savoie.

four months after the decease of Queen Anne. The Duchess d'Alençon was present at her brother's nuptials, as were all the other royal princes, princesses, and principal courtiers, arrayed in long robes of black cloth;[1] for the king would not permit the mourning for the deceased queen to be laid aside, even on his daughter's wedding day.

The Countess Louisa, from the period of her son's marriage, assumed a much more prominent part in state affairs, until the unexpected union of the king with Mary, sister of Henry VIII. of England, again appeared to endanger the Duke de Valois's eventual succession to the crown. Arrogant in her exultation, it is stated that Louisa's interference in the government and the internal regulations of the palace gave great and just offence to King Louis, and was in part the cause of his hasty union with the Princess Mary of England.[2]

The Countess Louisa, humbled and mortified by this adverse state of affairs, quitted Blois, in a high state of indignation, about the middle of the month of July, 1514.[3] She was accompanied by her daughter, the Duchess d'Alençon, who remained with her mother during this period of suspense, when her brother's future prospects trembled in the balance. So stricken by disappointment and grief was the haughty Countess Louisa, at the apparent failure of her ambitious projects, that she was seized with violent illness on her road from Blois to Romorantin, and was obliged to alight from her litter, and seek temporary lodging in a house by the roadside, belonging to a Monsieur de Paulegon.[4] Louisa's illness terminated in a severe attack of gout; it was her first seizure by that malady, to which ever after, while in the prime of life, she became a martyr; and which was the fatal inheritance of so many descendants of the royal house of Bourbon.

But Marguerite endured not these anxieties without the companionship of one who sympathized deeply in her sorrow. It appears that the young Duchess Claude, always true-hearted and right-principled, accompanied her husband and his mother and sister to Romorantin, and there shared the temporary disgrace which had befallen them.

On Thursday, the 10th of August, 1514, the king was affianced

[1] Mem. de Fleuranges; Brantôme, Dames Illustres.
[2] Mezeray Abr. Chron.
[3] Journal de Louise de Savoie. [4] Ibid.

at Blois to the Princess of England.[1] The Earl of Worcester, who was sent to Paris as Mary's proxy in the ceremony of betrothment, gives a vivid description of the content of the king, whom he describes as spending his time "in devising new collars and goodly gear for his bride." "He showed me," says the earl, in a letter to Cardinal Wolsey,[2] "the goodliest and richest sight of jewels that I ever saw. I assure you all that I ever have seen is not to compare to fifty-six pieces that I saw of diamonds and rubies, and seven of the greatest pearls that I have seen; besides a great number of other goodly diamonds, rubies, balais, and great pearls; and the worst of the second sort of stones to be prized cost 2,000 ducats. There are ten or twelve of the principal stones that there hath been refused for them one hundred thousand ducats. After the king had showed me these jewels," adds the ambassador, "he observed, 'My wife will not have all these jewels at once; I shall give them to her one by one, that I may receive in return more abundant thanks and tokens of her affection.'"

While King Louis thus somewhat ostentatiously displayed his rich jewels and precious things before the astonished eyes of his bride's proxy, Louisa was recovering from her illness at Romorantin. By constantly brooding over her son's disappointment, the countess's mind relieved itself about this time, by a vision which seemed to predict his future regal sway; and as she was a great believer in signs, tokens, and astrology, it doubtless afforded her comfort. Louisa herself thus relates the incident:[3]—

"On the 28th of August, 1514, I began to predict, by Divine prevision, that my son would one day have great affairs against the Swiss; for as I was supping in my wood at Romorantin, between seven and eight o'clock, a terrible celestial apparition, in form like a comet, appeared in the heavens towards the west. I was the first of my party to perceive it; but it was not without great fear, for I cried out loudly, exclaiming, 'Suisses! les Suisses! les Suisses!' My women were with me; but the only men in attendance were, Regnault de Reffuge, and my poor miserable servant Rochefort sitting upon his grey mule, for to go on foot was impossible to this poor man."

[1] Journal de Louise de Savoie.
[2] Cotton MSS.; Coll. Breq. lxxxv.; Vitell. folio 156, British Museum
[3] Journal de Louise de Savoie.

Throughout the variations in her son's prospects, Louisa, be it observed, was always persuaded that, at some period of his life Francis would succeed to sovereign power. It had been frequently predicted to her, by various sages and astrologers, whom she made a point of consulting on the subject, — a propensity which, as the countess did it openly, greatly indisposed the minds of the king and queen against her. When she visited the king at Plessis-les-Tours, Louisa made a pilgrimage to the abode of St. François de Paule, whom Louis XI. had established in the royal park of Plessis, to consult the saint on the future destinies of her idolized son. St. François, it is stated, replied, "Your son, madame, will be king of France, and will surpass in glory, riches, and honour, all the princes of his age, provided that he applies himself to the reformation of the church; but if he does not diligently devote himself to this great affair he will be a very unfortunate prince."[1] After her son's accession, Louisa caused St. François de Paule to be canonized;[2] in gratitude, doubtless, for the realization of his prediction, or, at least, for the accomplishment of the first part of it. Louisa's maternal love and pride would have been severely wounded could she have anticipated the very literal accomplishment of the whole of this alleged prophecy.

The news at length reached Romorantin that Queen Mary, attended by a splendid *suite*, was about to land in France; and soon a royal missive arrived there, summoning the Duke and the Duchess de Valois, and the Duke d'Alençon to repair to court to pay their homage to the new sovereign. Mary was received on her landing in France by the Duke de Vendôme;[3] when at a day's journey from Abbeville, in which place the marriage was to be solemnized, she was met by the Duke d'Alençon. The Duke de Valois received the queen a few leagues from that city, and announced the approach of King Louis, who met his young consort with a gallant cavalcade of nobles and ladies, about a mile from Abbeville.[4] The marriage was solemnized on

[1] Bayle, Dictionnaire Historique, Art. François I.

[2] Louisa makes the following sarcastic entry of this affair in her journal: "L'an 1519, le 5 Juillet, Frère François de Paule, des Frères Mendiants Evangelistes, fut par moi canonisé, à tout le moins j'en ai payé la taxe."

[3] The Duke de Vendôme had married Frances, eldest sister of the Duke d'Alençon, and widow of the Duke de Longueville.

[4] Mém. de Fleuranges.

the following day with great pomp. Louis's wedding present to his bride was "a marvellous great pointed diamond, with a ruby almost two inches long." On the next day he moreover bestowed upon her "a ruby two inches and a half long, and as big as a man's finger, hanging by two chains of gold at every end, without any foil, — the value thereof few men could esteem." [1]

Marguerite was present with her husband at all the fêtes given at Abbeville in celebration of the royal espousals. She does not bear a prominent part in the festivities; nor can we imagine the duchess to have favourably regarded the stranger princess, who, perhaps, might one day deprive her brother of his brilliant prospects. Doubtless, however, the young Duchess Claude and Marguerite found consolation in each other's society. Her father's marriage was a severe trial to Claude's fortitude, as she was compelled to lay aside her mourning robes, and on his wedding day, at the ceremony of the mass, to bear the offering before the queen.[2]

Mary's grace and fascinations, nevertheless, won all hearts. She alike charmed the gallant and impetuous Duke de Valois, the sedate Louis XII., and the volatile Brandon. The young queen, however, was subjected to the severest surveillance by the secret orders of the Countess d'Angoulême.[3] The Duke of Suffolk had been imprudently nominated by King Henry as chief of the embassy charged with the mission of delivering the princess to her affianced husband. Louisa was not ignorant of their attachment, and of the disappointment of the duke's hope of obtaining the hand of his sovereign's sister, in consequence of King Louis's proposals. She therefore instructed the Duchess Claude, and Mary's lady of honour the Baronne D'Aumont, who was devoted to Louisa's interests, never to leave the queen an instant alone in the absence of the king.[4] Louisa, it is asserted, was even obliged to admonish her son on the folly of indulging an excess of gallant admiration for the young queen, which, if returned, was likely to be so displeasing to King Louis, and destructive of his own interests.[5]

[1] Letter of the Earl of Worcester to Cardinal Wolsey.
[2] Mém. de Fleuranges.
[3] Gailliard; Fleuranges; Brantôme, Dames Illustres.
[4] Mém. de Fleuranges.
[5] Mém. de Fleuranges; Gailliard, Hist. de François I.; Brantôme.

The countess herself remained aloof from court in the seclusion of her castle of Romorantin; nor was it, as she herself informs us,[1] until Queen Mary arrived at St. Denis on the eve of her coronation, that she condescended to journey thence to salute her. The countess was attended by a great train of gentlemen, and made her entry into St. Denis in the evening. Louisa's interview with the young queen must have afforded considerable interest and curiosity to the courtiers; and Mary herself, doubtless, looked forward with some little apprehension to her meeting with the imperious countess, to whom her presence was assuredly so very unwelcome.

Louisa and the Duchess d'Alençon remained in Paris to be present at Mary's coronation at St. Denis, which ceremony was performed on the 5th of November, 1514. They also took part in the splendid procession on the queen's entry into Paris on the following day. Francis assisted at the celebration of Mary's coronation, and at her entry into Paris;[2] and whatever disappointment and chagrin he might experience at the king's marriage, he had prudence not to suffer the least external token of it to escape. Both he and the Duke d'Alençon distinguished themselves greatly in the jousts and sports[3] which were held in honour of Mary's entry into the capital. At the conclusion of the tourneys the countess and her daughter withdrew from the court, and retired to Romorantin, leaving the Duke and Duchess de Valois in Paris.

But, before Marguerite and Louisa journeyed homewards, again had the star of the young Duke de Valois become in the ascendant; and hope once more made the heart of his ambitious mother bound with joy. The fatigue which King Louis had undergone on his journey to Abbeville, and the alterations in his mode of life that out of complaisance to his young bride he had recently adopted, brought on a severe fit of gout, a malady he was frequently afflicted with.[4] This attack gradually so weakened him, that, at the tournament held in Mary's honour, the king had been compelled from feebleness to repose on a couch; while the queen stood by his side, "so that all men might see her," says the chronicler,[5] "and wonder at her beautie." Alarm-

[1] Journal de Louise de Savoie.
[2] Hall's Chronicle.
[3] Mém. de Fleuranges.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Hall's Chronicle.

ing symptoms soon appeared; but though his physicians did not then believe that the attack would prove fatal, Louis himself was persuaded that his end approached. Sending for the Duke de Valois, he embraced him tenderly, and commended his subjects to his care. Louis then solemnly confided his young queen, and his daughters, Claude and Renée, to the duke's affection. Deeply moved, Francis besought the king to be of good cheer, and spoke to him many words of comfort, assuring him that his physicians had still hopes. The king, however, repeated, "I am dying; I commend our subjects to your care."[1] Louis was soon after seized with a violent access of fever, which, after a few hours of acute suffering, terminated his existence. He expired in the arms of the Duke de Valois, who never quitted the couch of the dying king.

Louis expired January 1st, 1515, at eleven o'clock at night, having survived his marriage with Mary of England only eighty-two days. His decease was mourned throughout the kingdom. No sovereign of France had before been so beloved and honoured; and his death struck consternation into all hearts. When the king's coffin was removed from the Palace des Tournelles, where he died, to the cathedral of Notre Dame, the public criers headed the procession, ringing their bells, and proclaiming in a voice almost inaudible through their tears, "Le bon roi Louis, Père du peuple est mort!"[2]

Francis, on the decease of Louis XII., arrayed himself in mourning robes, and quitting the Palace des Tournelles, took up his abode with Queen Claude in the Palais. Thence he sent missives summoning the princes and nobles to attend him in Paris without delay. The king also despatched a messenger to his mother, entreating her to repair with all speed to aid him by her counsels. The Duke and Duchess d'Alençon were likewise specially summoned. The instant that the Countess d'Angoulême received intelligence of the death of Louis XII. she set out from Romorantin with her daughter Marguerite, and travelling with extraordinary speed for those days, entered Paris on Wednesday the 3d of January, two days after the king's decease.[3]

Great must have been the joy and triumph of Louisa, Francis,

[1] Gaillaird; Hist. de François I.
[2] Mém. du Maréchal de Fleuranges.
[3] Journal de Louise de Savoie.

and Marguerite when they met, subdued though its outward expression might have been by sorrow for the death of King Louis. After years of anxious suspense, the countess beheld the brilliant diadem of France encircling the brow of her valiant son; she saw him not only pre-eminent by rank, but pre-eminent in every quality which could challenge admiration: the most accomplished cavalier of his court — the most learned of the princes of France, handsome in person, yielding to none in martial valour, and the bravest of the brave amongst the renowned military commanders who had signalized their courage in many a hard-fought Italian campaign, during the late reign.

The destinies of France henceforth depended on the will of these three, united as they were by the tenderest bonds of mutual affection, almost to the exclusion of every other tie, — Louisa, Francis, and Marguerite. Passionately devoted to Francis, Louisa and Marguerite each swayed the king's heart entirely; no shadow ever intercepted or clouded the pure love and confidence existing between them. Louisa, with her profound and masculine genius, her talents for politics and government, her address, her undaunted courage, and determination of character, her dignity and beauty of person, — added lustre and stability to her son's throne. Marguerite's love was the joy and delight of his existence; she ruled her brother by her feminine gentleness, and her pure sisterly affection. That empire over her son's affection which she so jealously and triumphantly disputed with Queen Claude, Louisa resigned to her daughter Marguerite; content to share with her an equal influence over his mind and actions. Next to the king, the Duchess d'Alençon was the object of the countess's idolatry; and she loved these, her only children, with a fervour of attachment and self-sacrifice which compensate for many of her faults.

On the 25th of January, 1515, Francis I. was crowned at Rheims, by the archbishop Robert de Lenoncourt. A brilliant array of ambassadors, sent by the potentates of Europe to congratulate the young monarch on his accession, accompanied Francis to Rheims. Queen Claude, Marguerite, and the Countess d'Angoulême, were present, attended by the Duchess de Bourbon, the Countess de Vendôme, and a train of the noblest ladies of France.[1]

[1] Mém. de Fleuranges.

In the fulness of her satisfaction, the mother of the great king, Francis I., as Louisa delighted to term herself, thus alludes to this event in her journal: —

"The day of the Conversion of St. Paul, 1515, my son was anointed and crowned in the cathedral of Rheims. For this event I am much beholden and grateful to Divine mercy; as by it have I been recompensed for all the adversities and reverses which happened to me in my early years, and in the flower of my youth: humility was then my constant companion; nevertheless, patience never forsook me."[1]

On Thursday, the 13th of February, Francis made his public entry into Paris with extraordinary pomp. Near the Port St. Denis, a balcony was constructed, surmounted by a *ciel royal*, spangled with stars and golden fleur-de-lis, from which Queen Claude, Marguerite, and the Countess d'Angoulême witnessed the procession. Nothing could surpass the splendour of the king's attire, or that of his nobles. Francis was arrayed in a robe of cloth of silver, embroidered in the most sumptuous manner with his device and motto. On his head he wore a cap of white velvet, covered with jewels of inestimable value, and adorned with a plume of feathers.[2] The housings of his horse were of cloth of silver, ornamented with a fringe of tags of pure silver, and embroidered with his arms and motto. The Duke d'Alençon wore a habit of crimson velvet, ornamented with knotted silver cords, and embroidered in gold thread with the device of a bird's wing. There was a woven border to this sumptuous robe, of pure beaten gold, four nails deep, upon which was embroidered in raised silver letters, the words *nunc satior*, the motto of the duke. The whole was finished by a deep fringe of white and crimson silk, mingled with threads of gold. The duke's cap was of crimson velvet, adorned with precious stones.

It would be an endless detail to describe the magnificent attires of the nobles and ambassadors following in the cavalcade, which arrived at the palace about seven o'clock in the evening, when the king supped in public, attended by his great officers of state. A balcony was here again erected, close to the door opening into the Chamber of Requests, for the queen, the Duchess d'Alençon, and the Countess d'Angoulême, that they might wit-

[1] Journal de Louise de Savoie.
[2] Godefroy, Grand Cérémonial de France.

ness the triumphal festivities which ensued. The Dukes d'Alençon, de Bourbon, and de Lorraine sat during the banquet at the king's left hand; on his right were the ambassadors of the Pope, of the Republic of Venice, and of the King of England. Never before had been seen so splendid a display of gold cups, vessels, and silver plate of all descriptions. After supper Francis was entertained by a comedy, played by his loyal Clercs de la Bazoche, which terminated the festivities of the day.[1]

[1] Godefroy, Grand Cérémonial de France.

CHAPTER IV.

MARGUERITE had entered her twenty-third year when her brother's accession to the crown of France opened to her so brilliant a career. The power to do good, to yield to the impulses of her benevolent spirit, and to protect and reward learning and those faithful friends who adhered to the fortunes of her house during its period of adversity, henceforth afforded the duchess consolation for her domestic unhappiness.

Marguerite was now virtually emancipated from the control of her husband; and henceforward she consulted her own pleasure whether she resided at court, or with the duke in his hereditary domains. The will of the sister of the king, and of the daughter of Louise de Savoie, was not likely to be disputed by a prince of so little firmness as the Duke d'Alençon.

It cannot be proved, however, that Marguerite had any cause of real complaint to prefer against her husband, excepting incompatibility of disposition, arising from the duke's reserved and unamiable temper. The duke had never been wanting in respect to her; and throughout their union, when the disputes of the Countess d'Angoulême with Queen Anne deprived her children of the *prestige* of royal protection, Marguerite ever received courteous treatment from her husband. She had been permitted by him, likewise, to consult her own pleasure on most matters. The duke stipulated only that she should not constantly absent herself from court; or quit, without his permission, his favourite abode at Argentan. It required, however, more than this to satisfy a heart like that of Marguerite. The Duke d'Alençon knew not how to appropriate its treasures; and, disappointed and wounded, the duchess centred her affection on her brother, her friends, and, for a time, on the cultivation of that literature which she so ardently loved.

Soon, however, other wants, other and more noble objects of interest absorbed Marguerite's soul. Her persevering pursuit of learning was at length crowned by a knowledge to confess which in the face of Paris and the court required the voice of a personage no less exalted than the sister of the king, — of her whom Francis so singularly loved, and always called *sa mignonne*.[1] But meantime Marguerite yielded herself, without thought of the past or hope for the future, to enjoy the splendours and allurements of the court, where her amiability and grace charmed, and rendered her the object of universal admiration. Poets offered her their most flattering incense. The celebrated Clement Marot, whom the duchess afterwards took into her service, lauded Marguerite's personal and mental charms at this period in a sonnet, which appears to have been but the echo of public opinion. Marot describes the duchess as beautiful, upright, chaste, and modest; he says, "her constant heart, for weal or woe, never was too gay or melancholy;" and that "her head contained angelic wit, more subtle than before exhaled to heaven." He concludes his poem by declaring, that combining so many excellences, Marguerite possessed "a woman's form, a manly heart, and an angel's face."

The good and right principles of the Duchess d'Alençon prompted her to use her influence with her royal brother to promote her husband's interests and advancement. Though her true feelings towards the latter might be, and probably were, divined, Marguerite was far too proud to suffer the Duke d'Alençon to become the object of the neglect and impertinent comments of the courtiers; which must have been the case, had Francis manifested disregard of the claims of a prince so nearly allied to him.

Immediately after the king's accession, Marguerite, therefore, caused the Duke d'Alençon to be nominated Governor of Normandy;[2] she also obtained from the king a formal acknowledgment of her husband's claim to the precedence and prerogatives appertaining to the first prince of the blood, — a dignity which the Duke de Vendôme disputed with the House of Alençon. Francis, moreover, surrendered to his sister and her consort, the lucrative privilege enjoyed by every monarch on his accession,

[1] Brantôme, Dames Illustres.
[2] Capefigue, François I. et la Renaissance.

of creating a master in each commercial guild throughout the realm.[1]

The king, meantime, had not forgotten the claims of his mother. Scarcely was the ceremony of his coronation over, than he created her Duchess d'Angoulême, de Valois, and d'Anjou : he likewise ceded to Louisa his hereditary patrimony of Angoulême, and decreed that she should hold equal rank in the kingdom with himself.[2] On the 4th of February following, the king published an edict[3] in which he decrees that the Duchess d'Angoulême, on her first entry into any town or city in the kingdom, shall exercise the royal prerogative of granting full and free pardon to criminals confined in the prisons of the town, whatever may have been their crimes ; which pardons and letters of abolition, so granted, were to be held valid as if authenticated by the royal sign-manual. The edict, which was registered by the parliament of Paris in the following month of March, conferred also upon Louisa the power of creating a master in each organized guild established in the towns through which she passed. The king, having thus signally manifested his affection for his mother and sister, commenced, in concert with Louisa and Marguerite, to bestow recompense on those adherents to whose fidelity and attachment he was most indebted. His preceptor, Gouffier de Boisy, was created grand master of the royal household. The Duke de Bourbon received the sword of Constable of France, at the special request of the Duchess d'Angoulême, and was created Governor of Paris and of the Province of l'Île de France.[4] The president, Duprat,[5] who had been banished from court by Louis XII., for having there too faithfully served Louisa's interests, was recalled, and made chancellor. His predecessor in that office was the virtuous Bishop of Paris, Étienne Poncher, Marguerite's friend. At the request of his sister, the king bestowed the archbishopric of Sens upon Poncher.

Nor did Marguerite and her brother forget to shower their royal benefits on those illustrious *savants* of Paris whom their favour had already encouraged and protected from the attacks

[1] Capefigue, François I. et la Renaissance.
[2] Mezeray, Gailliard, Hist. de François I.
[3] Dated Compiègne, February 4th, 1514.
[4] Capefigue, Hist. de François I.
[5] Gailliard, Hist. de François I.

of the Sorbonne, which regarded the study of Hebrew and Greek as the most awful of heresies. Guillaume Petit, one of the most tolerant and enlightened men of the age, received the appointment of confessor to the king. Guillaume Cop,[1] Francis made his first physician; Pierre du Châtel, "the only man," Francis declared, "whose scientific knowledge he had not exhausted in the space of two years," was appointed reader to the king; eventually, he received the see of Tulle, and Maçon. Guillaume Budée, who was once the most profligate of the reckless court, but who, at the age of twenty-three, applied himself to the attainment of knowledge with as much ardour as he had before manifested in the pursuit of evil, was created a master of requests, and librarian to the king. During the first year of his reign, Francis, moreover, appointed Budée ambassador to Pope Leo, — an envoy worthy of representing France and her king, amidst the men of distinguished learning gathered at the papal court under the auspices of a Medici. Neither were the companions of his youth forgotten by Francis. Anne de Montmorency, so favoured by Marguerite's patronage, received distinguished marks of his sovereign's good-will. Like Bayard and la Trimouille, Montmorency made his first essay of arms in Italy. He was present at the battle of Ravenna, and there gave promise of the reckless bravery and determined courage which, next to Marguerite's protection, contributed to his elevation and renown.

Anne de Montmorency was born in 1493; he was the godson of queen Anne de Bretagne, who, as a mark of royal favour, bestowed upon him her own name. This appellation, borne by their renowned ancestor, the Montmorencys retain to this day. It is, doubtless, venerated by them as one of the precious *souvenirs* of their ancient glory, — a memento of the days when, under the banners of the Montmorency, the chivalrous nobles of France were led to the fight; and, above the clangour of arms, the air resounded to their famed war cry, "Dieu aide au premier baron Chrestien." Guillaume de Montmorency, the father of Marguerite's protégé, was a nobleman enjoying high distinction at the courts of Charles VIII., and Louis XII. In the midst of the increasing luxuriousness of the court and capital, and the

[1] Cop was the most eminent physician of his day, and the first translator of the works of Hippocrates, Galen, and Paulus Æginetus.

consequent relaxation of morals, the Baron de Montmorency maintained a frank simplicity of manner, and an honest candour of mind, which, while disdaining to succumb to the spurious refinements then in vogue, won universal respect. Marguerite approved of the honourable independence of Guillaume de Montmorency's character, and gave him her friendship. An enemy to useless ostentation, Guillaume de Montmorency, wishing to give his son habits of frugality, despatched him, though the heir to the noblest barony in France, to break his first lance in Italy under the nephew of Louis XII., the renowned Gaston de Foix, with only five hundred francs in his pocket, two horses, and a suitable outfit of arms and accoutrements; "for," said the baron, "none can know themselves, the world, and what life is, unless early taught to rough it."[1]

Francis immediately conferred promotion on Anne de Montmorency: he recalled him from Italy, and made him lieutenant of the company of men-at-arms, commanded by René Bastard of Savoy, the legitimated son of Duke Philip of Savoy, father of the Duchess d'Angoulême. Brion, Montchenu, and Bonnivet, were each laden with recompenses and honours. Not one individual faithful amidst the vicissitudes of their earlier years did Francis and his sister forget. Eloquent in the cabinet, the king, happy in a facility for uttering kind and gracious things, shone at this period, in the exercise of every public virtue. His valour and military ardour rendered him the hero of the brave and impetuous nobles, whose martial spirit had been restrained by the prudence of Louis XII.; while his gallant deportment, and gay *abandon* of manner, gained him the favour of the ladies of his court.

But, surrounded as he was by pleasures and allurements, Francis did not suffer himself to be diverted from his design of renewing the war in Italy, and of signalizing the opening of his reign by the conquest of the Milanese. He burned to avenge the disastrous battle of Novarra, and the invasion of Burgundy by the Swiss; he wished to punish the tortuous policy and insincere professions of Pope Leo X., the perfidy of the Emperor Maximilian, and the craft of his ally, Ferdinand of Spain. From the hour of his accession Francis had been silently and secretly planning measures to insure the success of this great

[1] Brantôme, Éloge du Connétable de Montmorency.

expedition. He renewed the treaty with King Henry VIII. negotiated the preceding year by Louis XII.[1] The young Archduke Charles, grandson of the emperor, sovereign of the Low Countries, entered of his own accord into amicable league with Francis, and sent the Count of Nassau to Paris to do homage in his name for the counties of Artois, Flanders, and Charolais,[2] which he inherited in right of his grandmother, Mary of Burgundy. The Count de Nassau was likewise empowered to negotiate Charles's marriage with the princess Renée, sister of the queen.

On the rumour of the king's hostile designs, the king of Spain, the Emperor Maximilian, Sforza, Duke of Milan, and the Swiss republic, with the exception of two cantons, united in a formidable league for the defence of Italy.[3] The pope was eagerly solicited to join the allies; but Leo, intent only on the aggrandizement of his house, and willing to support that power in Italy which would most connive at his ambitious projects of seizing several of the lesser Italian principalities, to bestow them on his nephew, Lorenzo de Medici, vacillated between his fear of the French and his desire not to incur the hostility of Maximilian at a moment when the cry for reform in the Church echoed throughout Germany. The Venetians, meantime, renewed their alliance with France; and Genoa declared for the king. Leo in consternation awaited the issue; the Swiss abandoned their projected invasion of Burgundy, and, under the command of the pope's general, Prospero Colonna, thronged the passages of the Alps, to arrest, if possible, the torrent of war about to overwhelm unhappy Italy.[4]

On the 4th July, 1515, Francis arrived in Lyons, on his road to Italy, at the head of a gallant army. The Duchess d'Angoulême and Marguerite accompanied him; while Queen Claude remained at Amboise, being near her *accouchement*. Seven[5] princes of the blood attended the king, each having important commands confided to them. Francis divided the army into three divisions: the Constable de Bourbon led the van; the king

[1] Gailliard, Hist. de François I; Mezeray; Mém. de Fleuranges.
[2] Capefigue, Hist. de François I.
[3] Mezeray; Mém. de Bayard.
[4] Ibid.
[5] The Duke d'Alençon, the Dukes de Bourbon, Vendôme, Lorraine, de Chastelleraud, Claude de Lorraine, afterwards Duke de Guise, and the Count de St. Pol.

was to command the centre; and the Duke d'Alençon the rear-guard. The greatest enthusiasm prevailed amongst the soldiers; for the certain conquest of the long-disputed Milanese appeared inevitable when attempted under the banners of their gallant young monarch.

The factious remonstrances of the parliament of Paris on certain illegal measures,[1] which the king had been persuaded to adopt, by the advice of his chancellor, Duprat, for the purpose of recruiting the exhausted finances of the kingdom, somewhat damped the exultation of Francis. The king, by the expression of his sovereign will, at length silenced the opposition of the parliament by commanding the obnoxious edict to be forthwith registered: but no sooner was this affair disposed of than fresh remonstrances commenced respecting the regency, which the king conferred upon his mother during his absence in Italy.

The charter of regency, which was sealed by Duprat, and confirmed by the king in council, virtually placed the sceptre of France, without limitation, in the hand of the ambitious Duchess d'Angoulême. Francis therein granted to his mother powers to raise levies; to convoke the *ban* and *arrière ban;* to change the garrison in all towns and fortresses throughout the kingdom; to dispose absolutely of all offices, ecclesiastical and civil, which might fall during her administration; to augment or diminish taxes; and, finally, if such was her pleasure, to assemble the States General of the kingdom.[2] When this decree, by command of the king, was carried to the parliament to be registered, the senators absolutely refused obedience, and despatched a deputation of members to remonstrate with Francis. The parliament especially refused to the duchess the prerogatives of making new laws, or of altering existing ordinances during her son's absence: it also attempted to deprive her of the power of bestowing ecclesiastical appointments, or of exercising the royal right called the *régale*,[3] with respect to vacant bishoprics.

[1] The chancellor advised the king to organize a new chamber of parliament, consisting of twenty counsellors, and to sell all the places. Similar measures were applied to increase the other courts throughout the kingdom. The parliament of Paris, notwithstanding its vehement remonstrances, was compelled to register this edict.

[2] MS. Bibl. du Roi. The act is dated Lyons, 15th July, 1515.

[3] The *régale* was the right which the king of France possessed to seize the temporalities of vacant archbishoprics and bishoprics, and to confer the benefices

The king indignantly rejected the remonstrances of his parliament, declaring that he should regard any attempt to curtail his mother's prerogatives as regent, as an insult to his royal authority. He afterwards sent a stern message to the parliament, commanding the immediate registration of the edict. The royal mandate was reluctantly obeyed; from thenceforth, however, commenced that spirit of hostility to the government of Francis which the parliament of Paris so perseveringly displayed. From this period, the parliament began to displease the king; the Chancellor Duprat to incur the hatred and suspicion of the people; and the Duchess d'Angoulême to inspire fear and distrust in every mind: for what projects might not an ambition so unmeasured as her own accomplish through her boundless influence over her son?

Meanwhile, the vanguard of the royal army forded the River Durance, and, amidst incredible toil and hardship, crossed the Alps. The French then poured with irresistible fury on the plains of Italy, and while the Swiss and their general, Prospero Colonna, thought them still enveloped in the fastnesses of the mountains, surprised the little town of Villa-Franca, and took Colonna prisoner.

When the news of the defeat of Colonna reached Lyons, the king, transported with joy, took leave of his mother and sister, and, at the head of one of the finest armies ever assembled on the soil of France, — well disciplined, and commanded by old and experienced veterans, initiated in the tactics of Italian warfare, — pushed on for Turin.[1]

Marguerite and the Duchess d'Angoulême, or Madame, as was from henceforth Louisa's stately appellative at her son's court, then journeyed slowly from Lyons back to Amboise, where they arrived a few days after Queen Claude had given birth to a daughter.[2] Doubtless it was a disappointment to the haughty regent that her first despatch to her son did not crown the glory of France by announcing the birth of a dauphin.

During the short period between the king's departure and his triumphant return to France — an interval not exceeding four months — the Duchess d'Alençon resided with her mother and Queen Claude at Amboise. We have no record how Marguerite

within such dioceses, until the prelate nominated to the see had taken the oath of allegiance, and assumed personal possession of his diocese.

[1] Mezeray. [2] Journal de Louise de Savoie.

passed this period of her husband's absence. Her time, doubtless, was spent in study, in correspondence with her learned friends, and in the society of her sister-in-law, Queen Claude, who was inconsolable for the absence of the king, and whose gentle spirit was too often awed and wounded by the imperious humours of the Duchess d'Angoulême.[1] The news of the glorious victory of Marignano over the Swiss, and of the subsequent occupation of the Milanese by the French, reached Marguerite and her mother while sojourning at Amboise. Francis announced his victory in a letter to the Duchess d'Angoulême in which he minutely recapitulated the incidents of the battle. In her exultation at the news, the Duchess d'Angoulême performed a pilgrimage on foot to the shrine of Notre Dames des Fontaines, to recommend afresh to the care of Heaven "him whom I love more than myself, my glorious son and triumphant Cæsar, the conqueror of the Helvetians." The intelligence of the bloody defeat of Marignano made Leo quail on his pontifical throne. He trembled for the safety of the ecclesiastical states; and he dreaded lest the conqueror of Milan might decree the expulsion of the Medici from Florence. Without heeding, therefore, the remonstrances of the vacillating Maximilian, who, now that the French had made themselves masters of Italy, began in good earnest to borrow money and raise levies for the aid of his allies, the pope opened negotiations with Francis, signed a treaty at Viterbo, and proposed an interview at Bologna.[2]

The three points to be there discussed were, the king's pretensions to the crown of Naples; the conduct of Leo towards the vassals of the Holy See, whom his inordinate ambition had despoiled of their territories; and the affairs of the Gallican Church.

From the conferences which ensued between Francis and Pope Leo, resulted the famous Concordat, and the total abolition of the Pragmatic Sanction, the ecclesiastical code which, since the reign of Charles VII. had governed the French church. The abolition of the Pragmatic raised up stormy dissensions between the parliament, the Sorbonne, and the court; and by the discussions that it excited hastened the spread of the principles of

[1] Brantôme, Dames Illustres, Vie de la Reine Claude.
[2] Mezeray, Abrég. Chron.

reform already kindled in the heart of the University, in which Marguerite hereafter largely participated.

The Pragmatic was a *resumé* of most of the decrees of the Council of Bâle, solemnly accepted and promulgated by Charles VII. at an assembly held at Bourges, in the year 1438. The main points of the Pragmatic were, that a general council should be held every ten years; that the annats, the reserves, and the expectatives of benefices — sources of great profit to the Roman See — should be abolished; and that the pope should himself be subjected to the authority of general councils. Nothing could be more distasteful to the popes than this code: it deprived them of their pretended infallibility, and it impoverished their finances. Pius II.,[1] who, before his election to the papacy, was secretary to the bishops assembled at Bâle, and had written most eloquently in defence of the council, no sooner assumed the tiara than he disowned his former writings, and anathematizing the decrees of the council as heretical, vehemently urged the king to set aside the Pragmatic. Charles VII., however, refused compliance with the papal mandate, and maintained it in full integrity until his decease. Upon the accession of Louis XI., the pope again set to work, and by the aid of Joffredi, Bishop of Arras, whom he bribed by a cardinal's hat, persuaded the king to issue a Declaration preparatory to the total abolition of the Pragmatic, in November of the year 1461.[2] Louis, whether he had received a hint to the purport, or formed his own conjectures, concluded that, if he abandoned the Pragmatic to please the pope, Pius, out of like complaisance, would cease to support the claims of Ferdinand of Arragon on the crown of Naples. To this exchange the king had not the slightest objection; but while the pope's intentions remained uncertain, Louis contrived, by secretly fomenting the opposition of the parliament and the universities, to delay the registration of the edict. He wrote, however, to the pope, promising compliance with his desires. Louis's letter is a masterpiece of craft and dissimulation; it had its effect, however, for the news of the king's supposed acquiescence was received with frantic joy in Rome. The obnoxious Pragmatic was dragged through the streets in triumph,[3] and burned before the Vatican.

[1] Œneas Sylvius Picolomini.
[2] Gailliard, Hist. de François I., vol. v.
[3] MS. No. 6762. Bibl. Roy.

Pius, thinking that the king's conscience would not now permit him to recede from his solemn engagement to the Holy See, shortly afterwards avowed his sympathy with the Arragonese claimant of the crown of Naples. Louis had then only reigned a year, or the pope would have better appreciated the inflexible tenacity of his character. The papal ambassador, whom Pius sent to thank and congratulate Louis, had scarcely quitted the kingdom, when, to the consternation of the pope, the abhorred Pragmatic issued again from the archives of the realm, and became the ecclesiastical code of France.

At Bologna, Pope Leo X. again made urgent demand to Francis I. for the abrogation of the Pragmatic. To restore the pecuniary privileges of the Holy See, and to rescue the popedom from the humiliation of even a nominal subjection to general councils, was Leo's aim in the negotiation. Francis desired to conciliate the pope, whose friendship was advantageous to his Italian interests; moreover, the Duchess d'Angoulême and Duprat represented that if the Holy See could be induced to cede to the crown its privilege of nomination to lapsed benefices, it would place a fertile source of revenue and power in his hands. At length a compromise was effected between the king and the pope, by which Leo granted to Francis the absolute power of nominating to vacant benefices throughout his kingdom, — a power destroying the freedom of ecclesiastical elections by the chapters, subject to the papal approbation of the elect, hitherto the invariable usage in France except in a few special cases; and Francis, in return, conceded to Leo the first fruits, or a year's revenue of such benefices as he thus conferred.[1] This agreement was the foundation of the famous Concordat, which was received throughout France with mingled rage, irony, and contempt; exciting most strenuous opposition from the clergy and people; and everywhere weakening the authority of the pope.[2] The fatal concession which gave the king power to nominate to bishoprics placed the most important benefices of the kingdom in the hands of his profligate mistresses and courtiers. More and more, therefore, the Church of Rome fell into disrepute; and her oppression and simoniacal practices became themes of general opprobrium.

[1] Capefigue; Mezeray.

[2] "On ne vit jamais d'échange plus bizarre," says Mezeray; "le pape, qui est une puissance spirituelle prit le temporel pour lui et donna le spirituel à un prince temporel."

Having so satisfactorily settled his affairs in Italy, Francis returned to France, after a glorious campaign, throughout which his military abilities and personal valour secured him the respect of his veteran officers and the applause of his subjects. The queen, accompanied by the Duchess d'Angoulême and by Marguerite, met Francis at Sisteron, in Provence, on the 13th January, 1516.[1]

The Duke d'Alençon accompanied the king from Italy; but it appears that Marguerite and her husband met only at Lyons, where Francis sojourned for some days after his return. Her brother's prosperity and happiness made Marguerite feel her own isolation more keenly. Not the slightest sympathy had sprung up between herself and the Duke d'Alençon. No children blessed their union, to afford a common bond of interest between them. Marguerite's outward conduct as a wife was irreproachable; but whether she assiduously enough applied those fascinating graces for which she is so celebrated, to subdue the churlishness of her spouse, must ever remain in doubt. There might be much in Marguerite's position, blameless though her conduct was, likely to kindle the angry resentment of a man of gloomy temperament, such as the Duke d'Alençon. Conscious of his wife's coldness, and also that her alienation from him could be no secret amongst the courtiers, the duke beheld Marguerite the object of the extravagant homage of the court. But it was the king's sister, not the Duchess d'Alençon, that the courtiers adored, fought for, and lauded in every kind of sonnet and verse. It was the most noble Princess Marguerite, sister of the great King Francis I., to whom the *savants* of the capital dedicated their works, but not the consort of Charles d'Alençon, whose praises they disseminated throughout Europe. The Duke d'Alençon was as completely forgotten in all that concerned Marguerite as if he existed not, or was nothing to her. Surrounded by a brilliant circle of gallant young nobles, jealous of her smiles and treasuring her words, Marguerite reigned a queen in her brother's court. She was the heroine of the fêtes, tournaments, and balls with which the king enlivened his court. Queen Claude lived comparatively neglected; even the Duchess d'Angoulême, proud of her daughter's triumphs, permitted Marguerite that ascendency which she ever sternly denied to her son's gentle and much enduring consort.

[1] Journal de Louise de Savoie.

Marguerite's position at the court, nevertheless, was a very dangerous one: young, beautiful, and lively, she was beset by temptations and seductions. The name of the Duke d'Alençon was no shield to his wife; his character was held in contempt; and Marguerite's indifference did not tend to inspire the courtiers with a greater respect. Francis, gay and gallant himself, laughed at, and encouraged the profound devotion which everywhere encircled his accomplished sister, instead of firmly repressing its outward demonstration, out of regard for her reputation. Marguerite, however, was equal to her position; she graciously received the adulation of the court; she accepted the *jeux d'esprit*, and impromptus composed in her honour; and gathered round her the *élite* of the cavaliers, without once compromising the repute she had acquired for prudence and circumspection of conduct.

The most ardent of the Duchess d'Alençon's many admirers at this period was the Admiral de Bonnivet.[1] Bold, reckless, clever, and unscrupulous, the daring of Bonnivet's deportment captivated Francis, who bestowed upon him numberless marks of royal favour. The profligacy of his character, however, equalled its audacious defiance of decorum and restraint. The most beautiful and accomplished woman of the court, Marguerite became as much the object of Bonnivet's lawless passion as if she had not been his sovereign's sister, or the consort of the Duke d'Alençon. Receiving nothing but well-merited repulse, Bonnivet at length so far forgot all propriety as to offer a most unpardonable and atrocious insult to the duchess, during a short sojourn made by the court at one of his country houses, and which forever excluded him from her favour and patronage. A similar affront offered to the unfortunate Mary Stuart some fifty years afterwards, cost the audacious offender, Chastelard, his head. Outraged beyond measure, Marguerite was about to carry her complaint to the king, a step which must have terminated in Bonnivet's ruin, had not Madame de Châtillon, lady in waiting to the duchess and her former preceptress, implored her to desist, on the plea "that a woman's honour was of such price-

[1] Gillaume Gouffier, Seigneur de Bonnivet, son of the Sénéchal de Saintonge, and brother of the grand master of the king's household, Artus Gouffier de Boisy, formerly preceptor to Francis. Bonnivet was elevated to the dignity of admiral of France in 1517.

less worth, and so delicate and easily sullied, that it could never be exposed to public discussion without suffering grave deterioration."[1] The admiral's penitent supplications that she would be pleased to spare his life, by hiding his guilty intentions from the king, had also their due weight; and Marguerite at length gave her promise that she would refrain from denouncing Bonnivet to her brother. The duchess, however, sent the admiral word not to presume to appear again in her presence, leaving him to devise any expedient his ingenuity might suggest to excuse his absence to the king, who had conferred so great a favour upon him as to become his guest. The admiral, therefore, found no other resource than to take to his bed, and feign violent and sudden illness, while inwardly execrating Marguerite's method of retaliation for his injurious treatment.

As the king was on his road to make his public entry into the town of Orleans,[2] Bonnivet's durance was not prolonged. He suffered the well-deserved mortification, however, of becoming the object of the bons-mots, and jests of the witty courtiers, who were not a little mystified at the sudden indisposition of their host; besides being aware that his royal master, before his departure, had manifested displeasure on receiving his excuses.

It was long before Bonnivet presumed to appear again at court. Marguerite never restored him to her favour; and the persevering dislike manifested by her greatly impeded the admiral's ambitious projects.

Marguerite, meantime, continued to employ herself in the composition of her celebrated Heptameron. While she journeyed about the kingdom with Francis and the court, the Duchess d'Alençon amused herself with composing these tales, "so I have heard my grandmother[3] relate," says Brantôme, "who always accompanied her (the duchess) in her litter, as her *dame d'honneur*, and held her writing desk." The tales in the Heptameron present vivid and satirical pictures of the corruption of the times, and the disorders of the priests and the monks. Upon these latter personages, Marguerite is unsparing in her raillery. Their deceit, scandals, and gluttonous propensities are themes

[1] Brantôme, Dames Illustres.

[2] The king made his entry into Orleans, 18th of January, 1517.

[3] Louise de Daillon, wife of the Seigneur de la Chateigneraye, chamberlain in ordinary to the king, and Sénéchal of Poitou.

upon which she wittily, rather than decently, descants; her caustic humour leaves no possible crime or incident of their lives untouched.

The style of Marguerite's *nouvelles* is in close imitation of Boccaccio's Decameron, which, as the Italian language was familiar to the duchess at an early age, she had probably perused before the book was translated into her native tongue in the year 1521.[1] The tellers of the stories in the Heptameron are a company of joyous and merry adventurers, whom Marguerite imagines, in consequence of a great inundation of the Gave Béarnnois, to have taken refuge in the monastery of Notre Dame de Serrance, under the direction of "a widow of long experience named Oyselle, who had resolved to banish from her mind all fear of bad roads, in order to reach our Lady of Serrance. Not for this that she was superstitious enough to believe that the glorious Virgin had left the right hand of her Son to come and inhabit the dreary world; but that she wished to see so famed a spot of which she had heard much: besides, she was fully persuaded that if there existed a way to escape any danger, the monks were certain to have discovered it."[2]

Marguerite evidently intends to portray herself, or the Duchess d'Angoulême, in the widow Oyselle. It is the widow who presides at the meeting of the friends "in the green and beautiful meadow on the bank of the river Gave; where the trees were so thick of foliage that the sun could not penetrate the shade, or dispel the delicious freshness of the air; and where the grass was so delicate that no carpets were needed to repose upon."[3] She it is, also, who blames, praises, and administers the religious homilies which wind up so many of the tales. Marguerite introduces all the principal personages of the court in her narratives. Sometimes her father becomes her hero; at others, her husband figures in her pages. Her own daily adventures and those of Louise de Savoie afford her also happy themes, as well as the intrigues of Francis I.: indeed, it is believed that the stories in the Heptameron, written by the Duchess d'Alençon, are faithful and true records of scenes which

[1] By Laurent de Premier-fait.

[2] Prologue de l'Heptameron, publié sur les MSS. par la Société des Bibliophiles Français, edited by M. Le Roux de Lincy.

[3] Ibid.

actually occurred at her brother's court, rather than fictitious narratives composed for her own amusement. The writing of this book was the great stain and error of Marguerite's life. When her principles became settled, and her mind matured, bitter must have been her repentance at having contributed, by the license of her pen, to promote that subversion of morals, and contemptuous mockery of things most sacred and holy, which became so fearful a sign of the degeneracy of the age. The Duchess d'Alençon, wittily and without danger to herself, satirized the vices of the clergy; for a higher intellect, and a clearer knowledge of truth had been vouchsafed her; but on the masses of the people, who yet remained immersed in ignorance, such writings, and they were multiplied in those days, had the most pernicious effect. An almost universal spirit of ribald incredulity became the fashion. The profligacy and duplicity of the church was a by-word; its corruptions, exposed by the keenest satires, were execrated; and men took refuge in sullenness and infidelity. Faith, during a dreary period of several years, seemed extinct; religion was looked upon only as a means of governing the people, and studied as a branch of political education; and if true Christianity had not revived to inspire anew the hearts of men with its beauty and holiness, a general overthrow of society, as well as of religion, must have ensued. The Reformation found Europe torn and divided into factions; faith and truth no longer existed in the world; moral principle had fallen with religion; frightful selfishness and scepticism reigned everywhere; and men, with no loftier restraint on their consciences than that imposed by the frivolous codes of knightly honour, lived in mutual distrust, hatred, and dissimulation.

Marguerite and her compeers — spirits as much in advance of the age as her own — did much to bring about this deplorable state of things. They prematurely opened the eyes of the people to their degrading subserviency to the ancient forms; but, only as yet half enlightened themselves, they knew not how to satisfy that eager, earnest thirst after truth which immediately sprang up, or to direct it to a purer source. The daring cavillers at the old faith as yet partook in the spirit of general infidelity. Their works, like the writings of Marguerite, exhibit a strange and revolting mingling of the mire of earth with the pure and everlasting truths of Christian observance.

Captivated by the applause she obtained by her *nouvelles,* the Duchess d'Alençon wrote on, regardless of consequences. Her thoughtless youth induced her to devote those brilliant talents, hereafter to be so nobly employed, to serve the cause of vanity; and to still, by worldly applause, the cravings of a heart created for better things, but then lonely, sorrowful, and desolate. Marguerite's writings sank then to the level of the age in which she lived. The grossness and immoralities she has described sullied the atmosphere of the court. Thus, the coarseness of the times somewhat rescues the Duchess d'Alençon from the charge of wanton indelicacy; though it cannot justify the concession of one so enlightened to the depraved tastes of this period. "If regard is had to the times in which the Heptameron was written, and the author's *youth,*" says the great historian, De Thou, "it will not appear deserving of utter condemnation, though certainly unbecoming the dignity of so great a heroine, and unworthy of her after life."[1]

The greatest public festival of this year, at the court of France, was the coronation of Queen Claude, which was celebrated at St. Denis on Sunday, the 10th day of May, 1517. In the royal procession to the cathedral, Marguerite walked next to Madame, arrayed in ducal robes, and wearing a coronet richly adorned with diamonds. At the ceremony of the anointing the Duchess d'Angoulême lifted the crown from the brow of the queen; while Marguerite unfastened the royal robe at the bosom, and after Claude had received the sacred unction from the Papal legate, the Cardinal de Mans, she wiped away the consecrated oil with wool, and replaced the queen's robe as before. When the queen descended from her throne to make the accustomed offerings at the grand altar, Marguerite bore the loaf of silver on a rich cushion covered with white damask; and accompanied by the Duchess de Vendôme, and the dowager Duchess d'Alencon, who respectively carried the wine and the golden loaf, she preceded the queen to the altar.[2]

Queen Claude made her triumphant entry into Paris after her coronation, on the following Tuesday, May 12. She rode in an open litter arrayed in a robe of cloth of silver. Her surcoat was trimmed with ermine, and richly adorned in jewels. Around her

[1] De Thou, vol. vi.

[2] Godefroy, Grand Cérémonial de France.

neck was a necklace of inestimable value, presented to her by the king; and her crown was so studded with diamonds, rubies, emeralds, and pearls "as to rival in lustre the rays of the mid-day sun." Next to the litter of the queen came that of the Duchess d'Angoulême, which was a very lugubrious affair, as, in token of her widowhood, it was covered with black velvet; the trappings of the horses were likewise of the same sombre hue. Next rode the Duchess d'Alençon on a beautiful palfrey, arrayed in a robe of cloth of gold, and wearing a ducal crown on her head. Marguerite was surrounded by a brilliant suite of young and noble ladies magnificently attired. The Duke d'Alençon rode on the right of the queen's litter, and the Duke de Vendôme on the left. This splendid pageant terminated by a grand supper at the Palais. The queen sat beneath a *ciel royal* of gold and silver cloth "most sumptuously beautiful," as the chronicler of these events declares, having Madame on her right, and the Duchess d'Alençon on the left, her majesty being well entertained all the time by a concert of harmonious instruments, "which melodious sounds rendered the hall a very paradise of delights."[1]

After the coronation of Queen Claude, the Duchess d'Alençon quitted Paris for a time, and retired with her husband to Argentan. Whether a rumour of the insult which Marguerite experienced from Bonnivet reached the ears of the Duke d'Alençon, so that, roused for once from his habitual supineness, he exhibited energy enough to carry his beautiful wife away from the snares which encompassed her; or whether Marguerite of her own free will honoured his ancestral castle with her presence, is nowhere on certain record. We possess, however, indirect evidence that the first supposition is the most probable one; and that Marguerite, while living in her husband's stronghold of Argentan, was very angry, discontented, and miserable. The duchess left Paris with her husband at the end of the month of May, of the year 1517. In the following month of June, Francis quitted his capital to make a survey of the coast of Picardy. The duchess in a letter, the earliest extant which we possess of hers, writes to the king from the castle of Argentan, entreating him in most piteous strains to visit her. Francis, probably not wishing at the time to interpose his sovereign authority in the domestic affairs of the

[1] Godefroy, Grand Cérémonial de France.

Duke d'Alençon, seems to have evaded a former request made by his sister to the same effect. Marguerite, aware of her influence over her brother, was determined not to be repulsed; she consequently despatched still more urgent entreaties for his presence, mingled with a mournful description of her unhappiness, and with tender reproaches for the king's apparent forgetfulness of her.

Marguerite's anxiety to see her brother at this period must have arisen, one would imagine, from some exceedingly urgent cause; she even offers to meet the king wherever he chooses to indicate, *feigning to leave Argentan upon another intent.* This would seem as if the Duke d'Alençon manifested impatience at his royal brother-in-law's interference in his concerns, and would have found means, had he been aware of Marguerite's intention, of preventing her interview, as the duchess professes her willingness to descend to subterfuge to deceive her husband. It might also have been the reason why Francis had declined to become his sister's guest, aware of the duke's jealous umbrage at his influence with her, and thinking it better, perhaps, to leave Marguerite and her consort to settle their own differences. The Duchess d'Alençon's letter to her brother is preserved amongst the mass of her other correspondence. Its superscription is, "To the king, my sovereign lord."

Letter of the Duchess d'Alençon to Francis I.[1]

Argentan.

Sire, — What it has already pleased you to write, the remaining part of which you promised to make known to me, causes me to continue in greater hope that you will not abandon your direct road to shun those who desire so to see you, — the only source and centre of their happiness, — even though the result of your visit should be to render that worse which is already evil. Let my will, however, be prescribed by yours; for never will that loyal and cordial obedience fail, which I have ever borne, and still will bear, to merit your gracious favour. If the entire imperfection of a hundred thousand faults makes you disdain my obedience, at least, sire, do me the honour and the kindness not to augment my lamentable misery *(ma lamentable myserre)* by requiring me to conquer by experience that which you know my utter helpless-

[1] Biblio. du Roi MS., No. 37, Suppl. Français.

ness to do without your aid, as the token[1] which I send you will demonstrate; only requiring from you, in return, as a termination of my misfortunes, and to secure to me a happy commencement of the year, that you will bear me in your remembrance, even as the thought of you incessantly occupies my mind.

Though eagerly awaiting the happiness of seeing and speaking with you here, the great desire, sire, which possesses me of conferring with you makes me very humbly supplicate that if the interview (at this place) be irksome to you, you will singify so to me through the bearer of my letter, and I will then immediately set out to *meet you feigning another intent.* You will thereby confer an eternal obligation upon me, as, to meet you, the most unpropitious weather and fatiguing journey will seem to me pleasant and agreeable repose, — and a benefit still more enhanced if it will please you, sire, to burn my letters, and to bury my words in eternal silence; otherwise you will render —

Pis que morte ma douleureuse vie
Vivant en vous de la seule espérance,
Dont le savoir me cause l'assurance,
Sans que jamais de vous je me défie,
Et si ma main trop foiblement supplie,
'Vostre bonté excusera l'ignorance
Pis que morte.

Par quoy à vous seul je desdie
Ma volenté et ma toute puissance
Recevez la, car la persévérance,
Sera sans fin, ou tot sera finie,
Pis que morte.

Your very humble, and very obedient,
More than subject, and servant.[2]

Not a trace remains of the event which dictated the despair of Marguerite's verses; or that serves to elucidate the mysterious allusions in her letter. When she so pathetically implores her brother "not to augment her lamentable misery by requiring her to conquer by experience that which he knew her utter helplessness to do without his aid," it would appear as if Francis had exhorted his sister to render her knowledge of the Duke d'Alençon's character subservient to her future happiness by more implicit compliance on her part; while Marguerite hints

[1] The verses, doubtless, by which Marguerite terminates her letter.

[2] The knife of the binder of the MS. has severed the signature of the Duchess d'Alençon to this letter; the only one out of 138 so defaced.

to the king that his power alone can insure her peace. Notwithstanding Marguerite's assertion that, unless Francis burned her letter and buried her words in eternal silence, he would render "pis que morte sa douleureuse vie," by some inadvertence the king omitted to do so, and this curious and mysterious letter has been handed down to us.

Whatever was the grievance that the duchess wished her brother to redress, she obtained her desire. Francis could not resist the grief and the entreaties of his cherished sister, "sa mignonne," as he called Marguerite. In all the pomp, therefore, of sovereign power, the king repaired to Argentan. Doubtless the Duke d'Alençon then found that though the honour of being brother-in-law to a mighty monarch was great, manifold were the inconveniences of that position to a man of arbitrary temper like himself.

The Duchess d'Angoulême notes in her journal that her son made his entry into Argentan on the 1st October, 1517, and that he was there mightily well received and entertained by her daughter Marguerite. The Duke d'Alençon had evidently, then, incurred the displeasure of his haughty mother-in-law, for the duchess does not deign to mention him; but speaks of the king's visit and reception at Argentan as if the castle exclusively appertained to her daughter.

Events, however, were rapidly gathering, destined to exercise an overwhelming influence over the future fate of the Duchess d'Alençon, — momentous things, which in their overpowering importance, made Marguerite forget her levity, her frivolous pleasures, her unrestrained wit, and led her to seek oblivion from domestic disquiets at a source sublime enough to absorb every faculty of her mind. For centuries a universal cry had risen for reform in the Church. "The Church must be reformed, both in its temporal head, and its members" were words which, for ages, had been on the lips of men of every class and degree. The Councils of Vienna, of Pisa, of Constance, and of Bâle, assembled for this avowed purpose. Kings, princes, nobles, men of letters, down to the humblest citizens, had each and all advocated and prayed for this grand consummation. It had been felt to be the want, undefined, perhaps, yet urgent, of every soul; but princes had striven in vain; the power even of the august house of Swabia availed nothing before the mysterious sway of Rome. The most

learned men of the age successively arrayed their eloquent protests against the shameless ecclesiastical abuses everywhere prevalent, and vehemently demanded the restoration of the Church to her primitive simplicity and purity. "O that I might die, if by my death I could restore the Church of God to her primitive holiness!" exclaimed St. Bernard, as early as the twelfth century.

In 1414 the Council of Constance met — that most august and imposing of ecclesiastical assemblies. It was composed of an immense number of cardinals and archbishops, of eighteen hundred priests and doctors of theology, the Emperor Sigismund with a suite of one thousand persons, the elector of Saxony, the elector Palatine, the Dukes of Bavaria and Austria, the ambassadors of nearly all the European powers, with deputies from the most renowned Continental universities.[1] Such an assemblage of learning, rank, power, and apparent piety, had never before congregated together. In eager suspense all Europe watched the mighty deliberations, whence was to issue the antidote to her ills. Vainly, however, did the eloquent tongue of Gerson, Pierre d'Ailly, or of Clémangis, reiterate the prayer resounding from every quarter of the civilized world. Where was the work of reform to commence? Was it with the supreme pontiff, with his clergy, or the people? True to her own, Rome dissimulated; she crouched before the tempest only to rise again with renewed vigour.

Every obstacle yielded before the assembly of Constance. After deposing three popes, and condemning John Huss to the flames, the cardinals took oath, as a body, that whoever of their number should be elected to the vacant pontifical throne would not dissolve the assembly, or even quit Constance, until the great reform were achieved. Deputies were forthwith chosen from amidst the envoys of every nation, to propose fundamental measures for carrying into effect the contemplated renovation. Joy and expectation filled every bosom; yet symptoms of lukewarmness might have been detected, and the result prognosticated, by the significant fact that the Council had been sitting for upwards of two years without promulgating one reform in religious theory or discipline. At length the choice of the conclave fell on Otho Colonna, who assumed the name of Martin V. With incon-

[1] Histoire du Grand Schisme d'Occident, par le P. Louis Maimbourg, liv. v.

ceivable impatience the measures of the new pontiff were awaited. But Rome abhorred even the abstract theory of reformation. Wielding men's prejudices, swaying by her mystery and exclusiveness the strongholds of superstition and ignorant prejudice, dominant where neither moral nor intellectual culture sheds light on the soul, and beholding by ancient and prescriptive right every nation bend the knee, and pay homage to her ritual, — the Church of Rome cared not that her clergy degraded religion and their own order. The wealth of the world still poured into her bosom; and rich tribute flowed even from those monarchs who, most despising Rome for her treachery and avarice, yet shrank from attacking that sacred and spiritual authority which the popes arrogated, and so skilfully knit with their temporal interest. More than this, some degree of respect was still inspired by the Romish Church. She had not then, as immediately preceding the Reformation, shamelessly bartered the spiritual for the temporal. The popes apparently enlisted the powers of the world to combine for the defence of the faith, — for the restoration of Christianity over large portions of the civilized world; nor had she so recklessly degraded the awful prerogatives she claimed, by showering down anathemas to protect some paltry privilege appertaining to the temporal prince of the Roman states. The prolonged session of the Council, however, was a source of perpetual heart-burning. Expectation rose with delay, and the popular clamour sent a thrill of foreboding into the hearts of Martin V. and his cardinals. In vain the Emperor Sigismund entreated, remonstrated, and even threatened; the tiara no sooner rested firmly on the brows of the new pope than he declared the council closed. Escorted by a cavalcade of 40,000 persons, the supreme pontiff quitted Constance (1418) to pursue his temporal interests in Italy; and the assembled fathers dispersed.[1]

One general burst of disappointment convulsed Europe when the Council of Constance closed, leaving its mission unfulfilled. Martin V. scorned the murmurs, forerunners of the coming tempest which arose. The people were contending for a principle as yet unrealized. The weapons of combat were still in the hands of the priesthood. The Bible was a rare book; and the study of Hebrew and Greek virtually proscribed. Mental ignorance was

[1] Maimbourg, Hist. du Grand Schisme d'Occident, liv. vi.

then, as it continues to be to this day, the shield and safeguard of Rome. No longer able for lack of enlightenment to contend against dogmas which the clergy everywhere proclaimed "as the invincible power and purity of the papacy," a deep hatred of religion and a contempt for sacred things took root amongst the people. They solaced themselves by cordially detesting what they lacked power to destroy: they gave their gold, and revenged themselves by ridiculing the benefits so purchased.

Amidst this general declension of religion and morals, another attempt was extorted from the Church at self-reformation. The voice of public opinion could no longer be trifled with; and to maintain in its integrity the power of the Church, it was deemed absolutely requisite to check the ribald incredulity of the age by presenting a semblance of the longed-for reform. In 1431 a council met again at Bâle. It lasted eighteen years, and dispersed after many factious and turbulent sessions without effecting the great work for which it assembled.

Despite the opposition of the pope, the clergy, and their councils, reform, nevertheless, made slow and certain progress. The capture of Constantinople in 1453 by the Mahometans had driven the learned thence, and carried into Italy, Germany, and France, the literature of Greece. The revival of the study of the Greek language opened the books of the New Testament to the learned; and the art of printing, recently discovered, multiplied means of instruction. In Germany, John Reuchlin was the instrument first chosen to spread the new lights which had dawned on the world by the revival of letters. Reuchlin[1] translated the penitential psalms, corrected the Vulgate, and crowned his labours by publishing the first Hebrew grammar and dictionary. In 1516, a year before the reformation was preached by Luther, Erasmus published at Bâle his critical edition of the New Testament. "God grant," said Erasmus, on sending forth his work, "that it may produce as much fruit for Christianity as it has cost me labour and trouble!" The Old and New Testaments, in their original languages, were thus restored to the learned. Theologians could study for themselves, and test the doctrines of the reformers; the human mind expanded, and the diffusion of knowledge, by proving to the people that their

[1] John Reuchlin was born at Pforzheim, a village of Germany, near to Mannheim. He died in 1522, at the age of sixty-seven.

spontaneous enmity to the old and corrupt forms was based on the immovable foundation of truth and of reason, redoubled their indignation at the deceptions palmed upon them.

Though the restoration of classical learning, and the consequent impetus given to the acquisition of letters, did much to weaken the power of the papacy, yet the popes themselves were chiefly responsible for the disrepute which they and their clergy had fallen into throughout Europe. When the pontiffs descended from spiritual things to earthly, they became subject to temporal laws, and temporal opinions. When murder, profligacy, fraud, and deception were proved against the supreme pontiff, however he might dissemble, and shield his crime under the specious mantle of infallibility, unerringly the principles of right implanted in every bosom refused to sanction, or acquiesce in, such acquittal. Neither could the multitudes persuade themselves that the terrible power of binding and loosing sins, or the power of eternal salvation or damnation, could really rest with the pope, as the inalienable prerogative of Christ's vicar upon earth, after having been exercised by such as Alexander VI.,[1] whose deeds of blood and debauchery struck terror into the stoutest hearts; or by one like Julius II.,[2] whose martial spirit and military achievements resembled rather the bold darings of a chief of *condottieri* than the meek and Christian deportment which ought to characterize the father of Christendom. When shameless courtesans and ribald priests met in the antechambers of the papal palace, and when the marble halls of the Vatican were often stained with blood, shed in midnight brawls, or secret assassinations in which the supreme pontiff was more than suspected of having connived, not all the latter's sacerdotal assumptions could shield him from popular indignation; which finally did more than recoil personally upon himself, for it destroyed those illusions upon which the vast and mysterious edifice of Roman Catholicism subsisted.

In France meanwhile the spirit of reform was making active progress. The seeds of truth had been sown in the very heart

[1] Rodrigo Borgia, born at Valencia, and nephew of Pope Calixtus III., who created him, in 1455, Cardinal Archbishop of Valencia. He was elected to the popedom on the death of Innocent VIII., in 1492. He died universally execrated for his vices and cruelty, in 1503.

[2] Julian de la Rovere, nephew of Sixtus IV. Created cardinal in 1471, and elected pope in 1503. Julius II. died in 1513.

of the proud and intolerant Sorbonne; good fruit was springing up; and the gospel, in all its purity and power, was preached where for centuries nothing but the propositions of the schoolmen and the subtle casuistry of Rome had been discussed.

Upon this great movement the eyes of the Duchess d'Alençon were fixed. Wearied with the frivolous pleasures of the court, which were never able to satisfy the cravings of a noble and exalted mind like her own, — sick at heart, and disappointed in her domestic affections,— Marguerite turned with all the eager enthusiasm of her nature to the study of what were called "the new doctrines;" she looked for support amid the worldliness and corruption which surrounded her, and found consolation in the gospel.

But the state of reform in France when the attention of the Duchess d'Alencon first become centred on its progress requires some explanation, in order to elucidate Marguerite's subsequent personal history.

CHAPTER V.

IN France, as elsewhere, the scandalous morals of the priesthood, and the sloth, avarice, and luxury of the great prelates of the kingdom, produced feelings of indignation, and alienation from the Church. The first breath of the tempest that for centuries afterwards convulsed France manifested itself, according to the genius of the people, by the dissemination of piquant satires, pasquinades, and songs, in which the dissolute lives of the clergy, their orgies, and dice-playing in the public taverns were descanted upon in language more humourous than decorous.[1] These epigrams, which were diffused over the country, sapped the lingering reverence felt for the sacred office of the priesthood; their irony and stinging wit delighted the people, who were thus furnished with language wherewith to vent their long-repressed aversion for their ecclesiastical oppressors. The bishops, instead of diligently bestirring themselves to arrest the defection of their flocks, lived, when resident in their respective dioceses, a life of luxurious ease and dissipation. At court, their ostentation and pomp, in many instances, exceeded the state maintained by members of the blood royal. Gambling, swearing, usury, and profligate intrigues were the ordinary amusements of these fathers of the Church while residing at the court of their sovereign. Honourable exceptions there were, shining as brilliant stars to relieve the otherwise appalling blackness of the firmament; but the great mass of the people confounded all without distinction in its blind enmity and hatred of a system which fostered such enormities. A priest, in the few years immediately preceding the outbreak of the Reformation, could scarcely stir abroad without receiving insult of the grossest description. Placards were perpetually affixed in secret during the night to the church doors, and at the dwellings of the priests,

[1] Mezeray, Abrég. Chron. Hist. Eccles. du xvi. Siècle.

filled with sneers at religion, and accusations against its ministers; until, at length, finding their good name irretrievably ruined, those ecclesiastics whose outward restraint of conduct had alone been dictated by expediency (and it must be owned that this class comprehended by far the largest portion of the Gallican clergy) remorselessly gave themselves over to the most scandalous and open excesses.

The parliament and the Sorbonne in vain exhorted the bishops to greater energy and watchfulness over their respective dioceses; but, with the pope and the king on their side, these arrogant and magnificent prelates ridiculed the seasonable admonition, and still lavished their revenues in folly and dissipation.[1] The Church at the commencement of the sixteenth century had sunk to the very depths of infamy. A reaction was therefore imminent. The first direct attack on the pope's supremacy was made in France at the latter part of the reign of Louis XII. Cardinal Catejan, in a work published in the year 1511, hazarded the bold assertion that the pope was absolute monarch of the Church. This book the king referred to the Sorbonne. Jacques Allmain, one of the youngest members of the university, but a man of learning and research, read before the assembled theologians a refutation of the cardinal's propositions, which was received with boundless applause.

The ray of light which had thus crept through the darkness of prejudice was not suffered to become extinct; it was to grow and expand until, like a beacon in the surrounding gloom, it showed men how to avoid the perils by which their path was beset. Amongst the professors of the university about the year 1512, was a man verging on the decline of life, of studious aspect. He was of low origin; but his genius proved a brighter distinction than mere nobility of birth; learned, pious, yet paying childlike submission to the authority of the Church, Jacques Lefèvre[2] was one of the most distinguished members of the Sorbonne, as well as the humblest yet most eloquent of Rome's disciples. Despite, however, the fervour of his piety, doubt arose in Lefèvre's mind; he knew the sinfulness of his

[1] At a later day, the parliament, attributing the rapid spread of heresy to the slothfulness of the prelates, ordained that the costs of the trial of heretics should be defrayed by the bishop in whose diocese the accused resided.

[2] Jacques Lefèvre was born at Etaples, in Picardy, 1453.

nature, and a terrible misgiving assailed him as to the eternal efficacy of works and indulgences to rescue from the penalties of sin. To kindle his waning zeal, Lefèvre undertook a task of immense labour: this was to collect the legends of the saints, and to arrange his narratives in the order in which the names of the canonized appear in the calendar. He had thus completed two months of the year, when disgusted at the palpable falsehood of many of the legends, he threw aside his work, and thenceforth applied himself exclusively to the study of the Holy Scriptures. Lefèvre felt his soul kindle beneath the influence of the truths there revealed to him. Often bewildered, even staggered, by the truths so at variance with the creed he had professed, faith upheld him; and, amidst the clouds raised by conflicting opinions and untiring persecution, Lefèvre beheld the dawn of that light in the Church which was never more to be extinguished.

Meanwhile Lefèvre communicated to his pupils the knowledge which had been revealed to him. From the centre of the popish Sorbonne, he fearlessly proclaimed the futility of works without faith; declared the one mediator between God and man; and boldly denounced the idolatry of those who invocated, and offered prayers to the Virgin and the Saints. The university listened at first in ominous silence. Lefèvre's lectures were thronged. The most rising spirits of the Sorbonne crowded to listen to discourses so novel and startling. Fresh disciples were added to the followers of the illustrious doctor of Etaples; and already the prominent tenets of the Reformation were repeated in the presence of, and even applauded by, the most learned amongst the Sorbonnists. The university was in a ferment; daily, groups of men met anxious to discuss the new doctrines. A small section of the Sorbonne ardently upheld Lefèvre's theology; but the majority of the Sorbonnists continued doubtful, inclined to temporize, and to crush the new doctrines by raillery, — yet always attentive to the teaching of Lefèvre, until the commencement of the reign of Francis I. Shortly before that monarch's accession, the celebrated Noël Bedier, or Béda, as he was commonly called, was elected syndic of the Sorbonne. Béda, a Picardian by birth, was a man of fierce passion and bigoted zeal. Eloquent and daring, his burning harangues against heresy, and against Lefèvre in particular, set the university in

commotion. War was Béda's element; disputation was as necessary to him as his daily sustenance. With wonderful talents for controversy, Béda prowled in the lecture rooms of the advocates of reform, ready to pounce upon any assertion or dogma at variance with the philosophy of the schools or the articles of the Romish faith. He eagerly dissected the writings of the Reformers to drag forth their errors and exhibit them in triumph to the hostile Sorbonnists. His fiery oratory raged against the study of the Greek and Hebrew languages; and Paris and the university rang again with the angry protests of the irascible syndic.

Like the spring of some furious animal on its prey, was the attack of Béda on Lefèvre and his adherents. His expressions of fanatic joy at the prospect of the war he was about to wage caused a thrill of horror to pervade the university; no one dare pronounce himself safe when the cruel scrutiny of Béda might detect heresy where none but himself even dreamed that it existed. The promoters of reform, and the Duchess d'Alençon herself personally, had much to suffer from the bigotry of Noël Béda and his colleagues; for even the august sister of the king, Marguerite, so lofty in rank and virtues, was daringly singled out for censures and attack by these audacious theologians.

Béda's preliminary measures were swift and decisive. Lefèvre was the expounder of the heretical opinions within the Sorbonne; consequently, retribution must strike the leader before it recoiled on his disciples. During the brief absence of Francis in Italy the syndic laid a formal charge of heresy against Lefèvre. The Church, generally, condemned Lefèvre; and upon this, the parliament of Paris, ruffled by its recent contests with the king, on the questions of the newly created counsellors and the regency of the Duchess d'Angoulême, commenced a formal prosecution against the doctor of Etaples for heresy. Condemned by the Sorbonne, the parliament, which, in cases of heresy, was only the exponent of the laws, and not the judge of doctrine, must have consigned Lefèvre to the flames, when suddenly a royal mandate arrested the proceedings, and forbade the parliament or the university to molest Lefèvre, who, by express command of the king, was restored to liberty. It is believed that the Duchess d'Alençon interposed her influence to save Lefèvre; a request which Francis might be more inclined to grant,

as he was highly incensed with and wished to humble his parliament.

Lefèvre and his friends, after this failure, had a short respite from persecution; some unknown influence at court, it was clear, protected the promulgators of the new doctrine. The attention, besides, of the factious syndic was concentrated on two events, which kindled his zealous ardour to such a degree as to absorb all interest in minor transactions. The one event was the presentation of the Concordat, by command of the king, to the university and the parliament; the other, the advent in Germany of the immortal reformer, Martin Luther.

Never was Rome more outwardly prosperous than at the moment when the Colossus which she had reared fell with a crash that all but overwhelmed her in its ruins. True though it might be that vital religion had long ceased to exist, the dominion of the Popedom was unimpaired. Temporal conquests had been achieved by her; the general councils were compelled to submit their decisions for her sanction, and to crouch at her feet. The Hussites and the Waldenses had been subdued; the universities strictly adhered to her ritual and obedience; her empire over the puissant realm of France had been restored by the Concordat. She was at peace with the Emperor, the King of France, and Henry VIII. of England, the three most powerful princes of the age, who each vied with the others in courting her amity and alliance. At the great Council of the Lateran, A.D. 1515, not a single dissentient voice was heard to protest against the discipline, the doctrine, the morals, or the projects of Rome. The public orator of the council ascended the platform, and proclaimed, before the assembly dispersed, amidst tumultuous applause, "Jam nemo reclamat, nullus obsistit."

About four months before Francis quitted Paris to visit his province of Picardy, and to become the guest of the Duchess d'Alençon at Argentan, the king went to the parliament, and with his own hands presented the Concordat to that very refractory body. Duprat accompanied Francis,[1] and made an oration by command of the king, in which he pointed out how needful

[1] Gailliard, Hist. de François I. tome v. The king was attended also by the Constable de Bourbon, the Prince de la Roche Sur-Yon, the Duke de la Trimouille, and by the Grand Master de Boisy. Francis presented himself before his parliament, with all the *appareil* of military pomp.

and requisite it was for the welfare of France that the sovereign should live on terms of amity with the supreme pontiff, whose enmity could traverse his designs on Italy, and produce the disastrous results which had darkened the close of the reign of Louis XII. The parliament replied by demanding time for deliberation, — a request too much a matter of course in so important an affair for Francis to refuse.

After an interval the parliament deputed the President Baillet,[1] as the university did the Cardinal de Boisy,[2] to convey the result of their first deliberations to the king. The Sorbonne excused itself from pronouncing a decided opinion on the new ecclesiastical law, on the plea that an affair which affected the interests of the entire Gallican church, could alone be satisfactorily settled in a national council. "You cannot decide!" exclaimed Francis impetuously, in reply to the address of the cardinal. "Oh! I will make you speedily come to a decision, or I will send you all to Rome to state your reasons to the pope!"[3] After this angry rejoinder on the part of the king, the President Baillet stepped forward, and contented himself with modestly observing, "that the question should again be brought before the high court, and that the members would take care so to conduct themselves as to give satisfaction to God and the king."[4] Francis vouchsafed no answer; but the Chancellor Duprat, who stood at his right hand, sarcastically replied, "The members of the high court truly appear to understand their duty admirably." The king, upon this, turned towards the President Baillet, and sternly said, "As for that, let the members assure themselves that I will compel them to do it."[5]

Undaunted by the menacing reception given to their deputies, the parliament and the Sorbonne still obstinately refused to accept the Concordat. All kinds of legal delays were resorted to by both these august bodies to retard its discussion. The motion for the debate was adjourned, and adjourned again. There seemed no end to the activity of the parliament for the despatch

[1] Gailliard, Hist. de François I., t. v.

[2] Bishop of Coutance and d'Alby, brother of the grand master, Artus de Boisy, and of the Admiral de Bonnivet. The Cardinal de Boisy was appointed legate in France, after the settlement of the Concordat.

[3] MS. de Faur cotté 8470–2, Bibl. Royale — quoted by Gailliard and Capefigue.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Gailliard, Hist. de François I., t. v.

of every other cause before it. At length, exasperated by these delays, Francis sent another mission to the refractory chambers, hoping to frighten the court into immediate compliance with his will. On the 26th of June, 1517, the chancellor, accompanied by the Constable de Bourbon, and the Seigneur d'Albret, entered the Salle de St. Louis, in the midst of one of the sittings of the assembly. Duprat carried a book in each hand: one was covered with cloth of gold, and contained the Pragmatic; the other, bound in silver damask, the Concordat.[1] The chancellor advanced with stately step, and silently placed the books on the table of the house. While Duprat was in the act of so doing the ushers suddenly threw open the doors of the chamber, and the king's uncle,[2] René, Bastard of Savoy, Count of Villars, entered. He advanced to the president's tribune holding a parchment sealed with the royal arms. The deepest silence pervaded the assembly. The Count de Villars presently unfolded the parchment and read the following sharp reprimand from King Francis to his contumacious parliament:[3] —

The king is astonished that the parliament still refuses to register the Concordat. We will, therefore, and straightly command you to give heed to what our uncle shall say in our behalf, as if we ourselves were present. Moreover, we charge you to proceed at once to the registration of the Concordat, according to its form and tenor. That we may fully understand how the matter shall have been settled, and learn the difficulties which may be raised to impede our will, we have commanded our uncle to be present during the deliberation of the affair, as it is our royal right to be, were we in person with you. See that our will be obeyed, for such is our pleasure.

Given at Amiens this 21st day of June.

(Signed) FRANCOYS.
(Countersigned) ROBERTET.

The Bastard of Savoy then drew his sword, and exclaimed, "Messieurs! the king is extremely incensed at your proceed-

[1] Gailliard, Hist. de François I.; Capefigue, Hist. de François I.; MSS. Bibl. Royale, 8470–2.

[2] René, the natural but legitimated son of Philip I. Duke of Savoy, and of Bonne de Romagne. His sister, the Duchess d'Angoulême, caused him to be created Count de Villars and Sommerive. The Count de Villars shared pre-eminently the favour of Francis. He married Anne Lascaris, Countess de Tende.

[3] Capefigue, Hist. de François I. et la Renaissance; MS. Bibl. Royale, 8470–2.

ings." The assembly rose in consternation; for never had the arbitrary will of the monarch manifested itself in so illegal a way. The deliberations of the parliament were always holden with closed doors, none being present but the members of the court. The compulsory measures which the king had thought himself justified in adopting, and the sight of the martial figure of the Bastard of Savoy, who still stood with drawn sword close to the president's chair, roused a spirit of defiance in the assembly. At length the first president, addressing the Count de Villars, said: "Monseigneur, we work night and day at this said Concordat: your presence, nevertheless, at our deliberations will be a most unheard-of circumstance."[1] The count replied: "I have not sought this mission; I am sensible of its odium. I wish to serve the parliament, and not to oppress it."[2] In proof of the sincerity of his words, De Villars consented to withdraw from the chamber, and await elsewhere the result of the deliberation. As soon as the count departed, the parliament, irritated beyond expression, and resolved not to yield to intimidation, hastily concerted measures to evade the orders of the king without absolute disobedience of his commands. To gain time for the members of the Sorbonne to support the parliament by the iteration of their censures on the Concordat, was a point declared essentially requisite. The senators, therefore, devised the expedient of sending a deputation to the king, to remonstrate on his violation of their ancient privileges by commanding the Bastard of Savoy to be present at the deliberations, and to excuse themselves for their past delay in executing his Majesty's commands.[3] Francis had quitted his capital for Amiens: the necessary delay, therefore, caused by the journey and the return of the deputation, during which various unexpected incidents might intervene to change the king's intentions, was so much time gained, — at any rate it would postpone for a season the registration of the hated edict.

Two of the presidents,[4] therefore, immediately proceeded to seek audience of the Duchess d'Angoulême, to report the resolution of the parliament, and to ascertain the precise locality in which the king was then sojourning. The duchess gave the

[1] Capefigue.
[2] Ibid.; Gailliard, Hist. de François I.
[3] MSS. de M. A. Faur, Bibl. du Roi, 8470–2.
[4] Jehan de la Haye, and Nicole d'Origny.

members a gracious reception; she informed them that her son was staying in the little village of Nempont near to Montreuil; and she even carried her condescension so far as to furnish them with a letter of recommendation to the Grand Master De Boisy, requiring him to present the deputation to the king in her name. Louisa, doubtless, thought that her son was stretching his prerogatives to their extreme limit, in thus arbitrarily coercing the two most powerful bodies in his realm.

When the deputation from the parliament arrived at Nempont, the king had just risen from table. He granted the members immediate audience, because — as Francis took especial care to inform them — the Duchess d'Angoulême authorized their mission, and they had respectfully waited upon her to ascertain this point before quitting Paris. Francis reclined in the embrasure of a window, when the deputies were ushered into his presence by De Boisy. He gave them a courteous greeting, and listened patiently to their address. When their harangue concluded, the brow of Francis grew dark and lowering, and he proceeded, in somewhat unkingly fashion, to administer so sound a rating to the astonished deputies as must ever afterwards have impressed them with a vivid recollection of the force, if not of the courtesy, of their sovereign's eloquence.[1]

Silenced and intimidated by the king's language and threats, the senators gazed doubtfully upon each other: they knew not what to say; but scarcely considered their mission accomplished, unless they obtained some more definite answer. At length one of the presidents ventured to address a few words of remonstrance to the king on the informality of requiring the members to deliberate in the presence of the Bastard of Savoy. Francis angrily reiterated: "Il y sera! il y sera! et le dites à la cour!"[2] The deputies then requested to know whether his Majesty would condescend to receive any further remonstrance which his parliament, in its zeal, might think fit to address to him. The king rose from his seat, and briefly replied: "I will inform the parliament of my will through my uncle, the Bastard of Savoy."[3] Indignant

[1] Hist. de la Pragmat. et des Concord. Procès-Verbal des remontrances faictes en la cour du parlement, au mois de Mars, 1517, 1518, sur la publication des Concordats d'entre le pape Léon X. et le roy François I., Bibl. Royale, MSS. et in-12 imprimé, No. 4426. This manuscript is quoted by Capefigue in his Hist. de François I. et la Renaissance.

[2] MSS. de M. A. Faur, Bibl. Royale, No. 8470–2.

[3] Ibid.

at this contumelious treatment, one of the members boldly asked Francis whether he would not deliver his commands to them in writing; or charge them with some definite message to lay before the parliament. The king had nearly reached the door of the apartment; he stopped short, however, and turning towards the deputies, with eyes sparkling with passion, uttered a stern and imperative "Non!" and quitted the room.[1]

Not a little daunted at the harshness of their reception, the senators quitted Nempont early the following morning, and hastened to rejoin their colleagues, to report the indignation of the king; while Francis proceeded to visit his sister at Argentan.

A violent uproar prevailed in Paris when the ill-success of the deputies was known. The university menaced; and the incendiary violence of its syndic, Béda, raised the passions of the people to the highest pitch of excitement. Armed bands of students perambulated the streets, threatening and maltreating all persons suspected of favouring the Concordat. Solemn masses were said for the preservation of the liberties of the Church and the kingdom.[2] Béda's inflammatory harangues were eagerly read, and dispersed about the city; yet the despotic will of the king presently compelled the parliament to resume its deliberations in the presence of the Bastard of Savoy. Lefèvre and his companions were overlooked in the fierce excitement of the Sorbonnists. Like the dashing of some mighty river on the rocks which would impede its progress, the university, with its fiery bigotry and contending opinions, chafed, impatient of restraint; while, from the vortex of its troubled waters, silently flowed the pure and sparkling stream of truth, destined to revive those who were sighing for peace and yet despairing of attaining it amidst the troublous scenes earth then presented.

In the midst of this turmoil the Duchess d'Alençon arrived at Amboise with her brother. Doubtless her presence at court was hailed by the factious Parisians as a favourable omen of the king's pacific intentions, for it was known that Francis could never withstand his sister's pleadings. People trembled before the haughty Duchess d'Angoulême, but they adored Marguerite; "for," says Brantôme, "she was very good-natured, gentle, gracious, charitable, very affable, a liberal alms-giver, disdaining

[1] MSS. de M. A. Faur, Bibl. Royale, No. 8470–2.
[2] Fontaine, Hist. Catholique, p. 16.

no one, and winning all hearts by the fine qualities she possessed."[1]

The Duchess d'Alençon, however, seems not to have interfered in the affair of the Concordat. Either she found the king determined to enforce his convention with Pope Leo, or she herself, perhaps, approved of that Concordat which was to render her brother's authority supreme over the ecclesiastical benefices of his kingdom. Marguerite's pride in her brother's greatness renders it improbable that she would interfere to prevent the accomplishment of a convention which conceded to him such important privileges, even had not her zeal for the Roman Catholic religion been essentially weakened by the perusal of the writings of Lefèvre and his disciples.

The Duke d'Alençon did not rejoin Marguerite at her brother's court, until the festivities given in celebration of the baptism of the dauphin compelled him, in common with the other great nobles of the kingdom, to present himself at Amboise. The duke probably resented Marguerite's desertion of Argentan, and her conduct in the affair that drew from her pen that mysterious letter of entreaty to her brother. There seems little reason to doubt that the duchess quitted Argentan without the willing consent of the duke, if not in total defiance of his wishes. The king, however, whether Marguerite acted well or ill in this matter, warmly supported her throughout, and lavished upon his sister every mark of distinction in his power to bestow. A few weeks after her arrival at Amboise the king created Marguerite Duchess de Berry, and resigned, during her life, all his royal rights, privileges, and interest in the domains of the crown within that province.[2]

This donation of the duchy of Berry was a great and noble gift from Francis to Marguerite. It gave her a revenue independently of her husband; and by placing the patronage of the university of Bourges at her disposal, it enabled Marguerite, while Duchess d'Alençon, to provide refuge for many of her friends when they were driven from Paris by the persecution of the Sorbonne.

Learning and science continued to occupy the attention of

[1] Brantôme, Dames Illustres, Vie de Marguerite de Valois.

[2] Description de la France, par P. de la Force, t. 6. The letters patent of this creation date the year 1517.

Francis and his sister. Men of letters received from them marks of signal favour and protection. It was no longer mere prowess in the field or nobility of birth which formed the passport to distinction and the sovereign's favour. The palace was a school in which *belles-lettres* were discussed, and scientific subjects investigated, with an enlightenment that ought to have shamed the learned bodies of the capital, wrapped in their narrow exclusiveness and prejudice. Everywhere Francis was accompanied by his men of letters, and to not a few of them he assigned permanent establishments at court. At table, in the court circle, or during the *promenades* that Francis so delighted in, literary subjects were invariably introduced by the king and his accomplished sister. The noble, with his robes of cloth of gold, and ancient pedigree, perceived that the sovereign before whom every knee paid homage accorded far more personal countenance and intimacy to the simple professor, by whose learning the moral renovation of France might be effected, than to the patrician, however illustrious, who was devoid of mental culture. The Duchess d'Angoulême dispensed her patronage almost exclusively amongst those whose talents shed lustre on her son's reign. Louisa's conduct, in fact, was unvarying on this point; she cared not, it was true, for high principle, or strict honour and probity in those she advanced; but one and all were men whose intellectual attainments elevated them above the level of the age. Marguerite's smiles ever beamed most brightly on those who sympathized with her tastes: a beautiful sonnet, a clever *jeu d'esprit*, or a profound dissertation laid at the feet of the king's sister, was certain to obtain for its author immediate notice and encouragement. To maintain their position in the circle of the sovereign, the nobles, with their grand ancestral names and vast wealth, were compelled to lay aside their haughty exclusiveness, and not only patronize men of letters, but seek to share with them in the new lights which so powerfully attracted their sovereign.

The king, and the Duchess d'Alençon, not content with offering personal homage to science, and gathering at their court the choicest spirits of the age, — a society in which comparatively few in the realm could participate,— conceived the noble scheme of founding a college in Paris for the cultivation of the learned languages. Marguerite entered with enthusiasm into the project;

she knew from experience what the revival of the ancient tongues had done for religion; and that the easiest and most certain mode of combating the ignorance and prejudice of the schoolmen was to place truth within the grasp of the multitudes.

The Collége Royale was to rise on a truly royal scale. Guillaume Budée, Cop, Étienne Poncher, Archbishop of Sens, and the king's confessor, Petit, were associated in the labours of its formation. It was to be built on the site of the ancient Hôtel de Nesle. Within its precincts six hundred scholars were to be accommodated; professors of the learned languages and sciences, assembled from all quarters of the world, were to respond to the king's invitation, and to raise the renown of this magnificent foundation throughout Europe. The professors of the Greek, Hebrew, and Latin languages were to occupy the foremost rank in the Collége Royale. The munificent endowment which Francis proposed to confer on the college amounted to an annual revenue of 50,000 crowns, — an enormous sum for the times.

It was the earnest desire of Francis and Marguerite to confer the supreme direction of the college on the famous Erasmus.[1] During the years 1517–18 Guillaume Budée was charged with this negotiation; and so intense was the king's desire to draw this illustrious man to his court that the affair became invested with the importance of a state embassy.

The love of ease, that ever influenced the decisions of Erasmus, caused him, however, to shrink from the fierce hostility of the Sorbonne, which already began to manifest itself in factious tirades against the new college, even while its existence remained a mere project. Erasmus, besides, would have been compelled to live at court; the slightest ceremony was irksome to him; he therefore declined the offers made him by the King of France.[2]

This disappointment greatly damped the ardour of Francis and his sister: the organization, however, of the Collége Royale slowly proceeded, when the breaking out of the war with the emperor effectually arrested the scheme. The project, however, was

[1] Didier Erasmus was the illegitimate son of a burgher of Rotterdam, named Gerhard, and of the daughter of a physician. He was born A. D. 1477, and became an orphan at the age of fourteen; but soon his marvellous abilities raised him powerful protectors. His real name was Gerhard, that of his father. He translated this Dutch name into Latin (Desiderius), and then into Greek (Erasmus). Erasmus died at Bâle, A. D. 1536.

[2] De Burigny, Vie d'Erasm. t. i.

assumed again, after the lapse of many years, though on a much less extensive scale: the Collége Royale was then incorporated with the university, and provided that illustrious assembly with a perpetual subject for captious contention and invective.

Amongst the various intellectual amusements resorted to by Marguerite and her brother at this period, was the composition of devices. During the reign of Louis XII. it had become fashionable for every princely and noble personage to assume an emblem and suitable device, — a custom apparently imported from Italy. Francis, on his accession, assumed the device of a salamander, with the words, *Nutrisco et extinguo.* Some authors[1] assert that this motto was composed by Francis himself; others, that it was a somewhat obscure rendering, in the Latin language, of the device assumed by Louisa of Savoy on her marriage with the Count d'Angoulême: "Nudrisco il buono, e spengo il reo."

This famous cognizance and motto of Francis I. are still to be seen on almost every public edifice erected in his reign which exists to this day. The Duchess d'Alençon, whose mystical turn adopted outward symbols to express the inward promptings of her mind, chose for her emblem a sun-flower, "because," says Brantôme, "her heart was devoted to God; and this flower bears the greatest affinity to the sun, as much for the similarity of its rays, and its leaves, as that it turns from all parts to where he moves." Marguerite added this motto: —

Non inferiora secutus,[2]

"to signify," continues Brantôme, "that she directed all her actions, thoughts, will, and affection, toward that Great Sun which is God."[3] The deep and growing seriousness of Marguerite's mind manifests itself in all her actions at this period. She had not yet openly avowed her adhesion to the reformed principles of the Church. There is every reason, however, to believe that at this time she was secretly studying and ponder-

[1] Le P. Bonhours. Guichenon asserts that the device was assumed in imitation of that of the Duchess d'Angoulême; Paradin, that it was the motto of the Count d'Angoulême; while Mezeray states it was the king's preceptor, Artus de Gouffier Boisy, who selected the motto for his pupil.

[2] "I seek not the things of this low world."

[3] Brantôme, Dames Illustres, Vie de Marg. de Valois.

ing those sacred truths which, subject as she had been, and as others of her exalted rank were, to the lax and indulgent discipline of the Church of Rome, must have burst upon her mind with startling conviction.

About the end of the year 1517 the Duchess d'Alençon took into her service Clément Marot,[1] who, before he became a member of her household had celebrated the beauty and accomplishments of his sovereign's sister. The king, aware of the pleasure which the duchess found in Marot's society as a poet, resigned his services to her. Marguerite bestowed upon him the same appointment in her household as Marot had filled in that of the king. He was presented to the duchess by the Seigneur de Pothon, whom Francis had commissioned to inform his sister of his resignation of the poet's services in her favour. Marot himself, in one of his poems,[2] gives an account of this transfer of his services from the king to the Duchess Marguerite. He says: —

Rien n'y acquis des valeurs de ce monde
Qu'une maistresse, en qui gist, et abonde
Plus de scavoir, parlant, et escrivant,
Qu'en autre femme en ce monde vivant.
C'est du franc lys l'issue, Marguerite
Grande sur terre, envers le ciel petite:
C'est la princesse à l'esprit inspiré
Au cœur esleu, qui de Dieu est tiré
Mieulx, (et m'en croy) que le festu de l'ambre:
Et d'elle suis l'humble valet de chambre.
C'est mon état. O juge Plutonique!
La Roy de Francs, dont elle est sœur unique
M'ha fait ce bien: et quelque jour viendra,
Que la sœur même au frère me rendra.

Marot's devotion to his patroness, "la princesse à l'esprit inspiré," was boundless. In his poems, he addresses to Marguerite the most passionate declarations of attachment and fidelity. In one sonnet he tells the duchess that "in adoring her, she will see him hated by those who have power to harm;

[1] Clément Marot was born at Cahors, and appeared at court as *valet de chambre* to Francis I. He was son of Jean Marot, who likewise enjoyed royal patronage, and was decorated with the title of "poète de la magnifique Royne Anne de Bretagne. Marot died in 1544.

[2] A poem entitled 'l'Enfer.' Marot therein addresses himself to Pluto. He was confined in the Châtelet, under a charge of heresy, when he wrote this poem and hence its title, meant to designate his prison.

but that the privilege of loving her is dearer to him, with all the certain evil it entailed, than the honours his enemies had the power to bestow, provided that she knew his weakness, and rewarded it by one glance of pity." Perhaps the beautiful duchess, with her sprightly wit and warm heart, had really captivated the affection of the sensitive poet; but there remains no doubt that Marguerite regarded these protestations as mere poetic fictions. Sonnets without end of most impassioned description were addressed to the duchess by all the poets of the day; and provided the verses were good, the author generally received some token of her patronage; or was honoured, as were most of Marot's effusions, by a poetic reply from Marguerite's pen.

But while the court was thus immersed in the enjoyment of festivities, and in the delights of intellectual pleasures, Paris, the university, and the parliament, continued agitated, and were repressed only from breaking out into open sedition by their wholesome terror of the consequences of defying the will of their energetic sovereign. The parliament, compelled to deliberate in the presence of the Bastard of Savoy, still firmly refused to permit the Pragmatic to be superseded without the previous sanction of a Gallican council. "Go,"[1] said the president Olivier, with noble dignity, to the Bastard of Savoy, on delivering to him a minute of the proceedings to lay before Francis, "Go, and present to the king this ardent wish of the assembly; and may he feel how much this desire is conformable to his true interests! You know now, as well as we do ourselves, the evils likely to ensue from the adoption of the Concordat. Disguise nothing to his Majesty, but relate to him faithfully the things which you have seen and heard in the parliament." It is impossible not to admire the firm attitude assumed by the parliament of Paris in this affair of the Concordat; and its courageous resistance against the promulgation of an edict subversive of the liberties of the Gallican Church, in the very teeth of the stringent commands of the pope, and of the sovereign; for it must be remembered in those days the power of the King of France was little short of despotic, and that the very existence of the parliament depended on his will.

An ominous silence of some weeks ensued after the Count de

[1] MSS. de M. A. Faur, Bibl. du Roi, No. 8470–2.

Villars departed on his mission. At length an order arrived from the king, commanding his parliament to proceed with the settlement of all causes pending before it. This order appeared to many of the members but the prelude to the adoption of measures of great severity to coerce the parliament into submission; nevertheless, there was no option but to obey.[1] The remaining few months of the year 1517 were spent, therefore, in judging suits, and in drawing up fresh remonstrances to the king. On the 14th of January, 1518, the parliament despatched two of its members[2] on the unwelcome errand of presenting these new resolutions to Francis.

The court was then sojourning at Amboise. The *accouchement* of Queen Claude was daily expected; and the Duchess d'Alençon, and all the noblest personages of the realm were there assembled. The deputies first sought an audience of the chancellor.[3] Duprat refused to receive them. They next applied to the Grand Master De Boisy, and requested him to procure them an interview with the king. De Boisy's answer was discouraging beyond measure; he informed the deputies that, aware of their expected arrival at Amboise, he had mentioned the circumstance to the king on the preceding evening, in order to ascertain his pleasure, and that Francis angrily replied, "Je les traînerai à ma suite aussi long tems qu'ils m'ont fait attendre."[4]

The following morning, however, their written instructions were demanded in the king's name, in order to be submitted to the chancellor. On the 18th the deputies were admitted to an audience. Francis harshly reprimanded them; and after distinctly stating that it was his royal will that the Concordat should be immediately promulgated, abruptly dismissed the deputies from his presence, ordering them to return forthwith to Paris.

It was in the depth of winter; the roads were nearly impassable; the cold was intense, and a heavy fall of snow on the night of the 18th increased the dismay and discomfiture of the senators. Their instant return to Paris seemed impossible. In this emergency the deputies again applied to the grand master, who, at their request, went and interceded with Francis for a

[1] Gailliard, Hist. de François I., t. v.
[2] The Counsellors Verjus, and De Loynes.
[3] Gailliard, t. v.
[4] MSS. de Faur, Bibl. du Roi.

few hours' delay, in the hope that on the morrow weather more propitious might dawn for their journey. "Tell them,"[1] replied the king, "that if they have not taken their departure before six o'clock to-morrow morning, I will send the archers of my guard to seize and throw them into a dungeon for six months; then woe to him who shall dare to intercede with me for them!" When this menace was repeated to the members they forthwith departed from Amboise; and after a tedious journey reached Paris in safety, despite the snow and the direful condition of the roads. They immediately repaired to the chamber where the parliament assembled, to report the fierce anger of the king, taking time neither for repose nor refreshment after the fatigues of their journey.

The following day the grand chamberlain of France, the Duke de la Trimouille,[2] presented himself before the parliament, charged by the king to exact its instant submission, or to proceed at once to the execution of the measures which his Majesty had decreed for the chastisement of the contumacious senate. The first president requested, in the name of the assembly, to be informed what these extreme measures were. "It is the secret of the king, and I cannot reveal it," replied the duke in tones of sorrowful, yet firm reproach; "all that I may at present tell you, messieurs, is that I shall ever remain inconsolable if you reduce me to the deplorable necessity of fulfilling it."[3]

Finding further resistance against the absolute authority of the king useless, the parliament yielded. It was not, however, until its existence as a deliberative body was menaced — for in that light the parliament interpreted the instructions given to the Duke de la Trimouille — that it proceeded to the registration of the much contested Concordat, the members solemnly binding themselves at the same time, however, to judge any ecclesiastical suits presented to them, according to the articles of the Pragmatic, — a vow which they adhered to until the 24th of July, 1527, when, wearied with their determined opposition, the king

[1] Dupuy, Hist. de la Pragmat. et des Concord.

[2] Louis II., Duke de Thouars et de la Trimouille, Prince de Talmont, was born in 1460. He was a renowned military commander, and was surnamed "Le chevalier sans reproche." The Duke de la Trimouille was slain at the battle of Pavia, A. D. 1525.

[3] MSS. de Faur, Bibl. Royale.

transferred the cognizance of all causes appertaining to the nomination of benefices in France from the parliament to the Council of State.[1] Universal and sincere was the grief that convulsed France on the forcible substitution of the Concordat for the revered Pragmatic: the people, generally short-sighted and impulsive, appear to have foreseen the evils that menaced the country; and the deeper odium and discredit which ere long overwhelmed the priesthood of the Gallican Church, when men whose only merit might be their favour with the abandoned women whose sway over Francis was so fatally felt for his kingdom's welfare, might be elevated to the highest episcopal dignities. No event, as it afterwards proved, conduced more effectually to the spread of the reformation in France than the arbitrary enforcement of the Concordat.[2]

[1] Gailliard, Hist. de François I., t. v.

[2] The Concordat was registered by the parliament of Paris on the 23d day of March, 1518.

CHAPTER VI.

ABOUT ten days after King Francis had so summarily dismissed the deputies of the parliament from Amboise the queen gave birth to her first-born son.[1]

The joy of Francis was unbounded at this consummation of the ardent hope of his people; it was fortunate, also, for his popularity that this happy event somewhat diverted public attention from the discreditable contest pending between the sovereign and his parliament. Francis despatched one of the gentlemen of his chamber, M. de St. Mesme, to convey the news of the safe delivery of Queen Claude, and the birth of the dauphin, to Pope Leo. His Holiness had been for some months past in a state of frightful excitement, on account of the opposition which the Concordat met with from all parties throughout the kingdom; and more than one petulant letter of reproach from the pontiff stimulated Francis to take active measures to subdue the insubordination of his parliament. To sooth Leo's irritation, therefore, and to bind him still more closely to support the French interest in Italy, Francis requested the pope to become sponsor to the infant dauphin, conjointly with the Duke of Lorraine.[2] The godmother whom the king chose for his first-born son was his beloved sister Marguerite.

The pope, gratified beyond measure at the compliment conferred upon him by the politic Francis, overwhelmed the French envoy with marks of distinguished favour, and named his nephew Lorenzo de Medici, Duke d'Urbino, to represent him at the approaching ceremonial of the baptism of the heir of France.[3]

[1] Francis, eldest son of Queen Claude, was born at Amboise on the last day of February, 1518.

[2] Antoine II., surnamed the Good, Duke of Lorraine, brother of Claude, Duke de Guise. The duke married Renée, sister of the Constable de Bourbon. Duke Antoine died in 1544.

[3] Mém. de Fleuranges. Mém. de Du Bellay, p. 77 t. i.

The Duke of Urbino set out for Rome attended by a brilliant retinue of Florentine nobles. In this train were thirty-six mules laden with costly presents from the pope to the queen. Amongst the gifts for Queen Claude was a sumptuous state bed, inlaid with gold, tortoise-shell, and mother-of-pearl.[1] The value of Leo's splendid gifts to the queen was estimated at the sum of 300,000 ducats. Not to be surpassed in generosity, the king settled upon Lorenzo de Medici a yearly pension of 10,000 crowns.[2]

As it was found impossible to accommodate within the castle all the royal and noble guests assembled at Amboise for the baptism of the dauphin, the spacious court-yard of the château was roofed in, and magnificently adorned. The ceiling was of cloth spangled with *fleurs-de-lis*. The walls of this vast pavilion were hung with rich tapestries representing the destruction of Troy, and the siege of Jerusalem. The lower court-yard, into which the chapel opened, was hung with fine tapestry woven with silk, representing the labours of Hercules. At the upper end of the *salle d'honneur* within the castle, a magnificent bed of parade was raised on a platform, upon which the little prince was placed with great ceremony before the solemnities commenced. Over this bed was a canopy of cloth of gold upon which the arms of the house of Orleans were blazoned, surrounded by an intricate embroidery of love-knots, *cordelières*, and ciphers From this *salle d'honneur* an elevated platform, upon which the procession was to pass, led to the chapel. As the ceremony was performed late in the evening, more than four hundred archers and as many Swiss guards lined the road from the *salle d'honneur* to the chapel, each man bearing a flaming torch, so that it was light as at noon-day.[3] First marched the officers of the king's band, with trumpets and kettle-drums, playing most melodiously. They were followed by the maîtres-d'hôtel of the royal household bearing their wands of office, and by a hundred gentlemen of the chamber richly arrayed. Then came the king-at-arms followed by the heralds, Savoy, Bretagne, Normandy, and Dauphiny. The chamberlains walked next, and the knights of the Order of St. Michael, decorated with the badge and collar of their Order, each individual carrying a torch of virgin wax. Then came a brilliant array of nobles walking two abreast, who preceded the princes selected by the king to take a leading part in

[1] Roscoe, Life of Pope Leo X.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Godefroy, Grand Cérémonial de France.

this pompous ceremonial. The Count de St. Paul carried the basin; the prince of Genoa, the ewer. The Constable de Bourbon marched bearing the waxen taper; the Duke d'Alençon carried the salt-cellar; and Monsieur de Lescun, the cradle. Next followed the Duke of Urbino, proxy for his Holiness Pope Leo X., very richly attired, and decorated with the collar of the Order, carrying in his arms M. le dauphin, and supported on the right by the pope's nuncio, and on the left by the ambassadors of the emperor and the Catholic king. Behind walked Madame de Brissac,[1] governess of the royal children, whose duty it was to support the head of the infant dauphin. The enormous train of the mantle of cloth of silver lined with ermine, which enveloped the royal infant, was borne by four princes, — the Duke of Albany, the Prince of Orange, the Count de Guise, and the Marquis of Mantua. Next walked the Duchess d'Angoulême led by the young king of Navarre; her ample train borne by the Countess de Villars, consort of her brother, the Bastard of Savoy. Afterwards came Madame Marguerite, Duchess d'Alençon, and Madame Renée, sister of the queen. The train of the duchess was carried by the Prince de la Roche-sur-Yon, and that of the Princess Renée by the Prince of Talmont, son of the Duke de la Trimouille. Next walked Philiberte de Savoy, Duchess de Nemours, sister of Madame, between the young princesses, daughters of the king, Mesdames Louise and Charlotte, who were carried by the Count d'Orval, and by the Duke de la Trimouille. On arriving at the chapel all these illustrious personages were received by the Cardinal de Boisy, and by a group of bishops and mitred abbots. The ceremony was performed by the Cardinal de Boisy; the font was elevated on a platform raised six steps from the floor, and adorned with tapestry, velvet, and golden hoops. The Duchess d'Alençon, and the Dukes of Urbino and Lorraine, sponsors of the infant prince, took their station close to the font, while the other princes and nobles ranged themselves, in accordance with the rules of etiquette, on the platform around. The king and queen, accompanied by the Admiral de Bonnivet, and by several other princes, viewed the

[1] Charlotte Gouffier, consort of René de Cossé, Count de Brissac, and sister of the Grand Master Artus de Boisy, preceptor of Francis I., of the Admiral de Bonnivet, and of the Cardinal de Boisy. This lady was first cousin to Anne de Montmorency, and held the titular office of governess to the royal children; of which Madame de Montréal fulfilled all the duties.

ceremony from a glazed gallery erected to the right of the font. After the termination of the ceremony a marvellous triumphant banquet ensued; afterwards there was a grand ballet and ball, which, we are told, the king heartily enjoyed.[1]

During the remaining part of the year 1518 Marguerite resided at her brother's court. The year passed in banquets, festivals, and in royal progresses throughout the kingdom. The Duchess d'Alençon always accompanied her brother, though we cannot find that she took any prominent part in public affairs during this period; at least, none of her acts remain on record. Marguerite, throughout her brother's reign, chiefly interposed her influence in affairs of religion, and those concerning art and literature. Excepting on one memorable occasion, she seldom, while Duchess d'Alençon, interfered in politics. Perhaps the jealousy of the Duchess d'Angoulême admitted of no rival in her son's counsels, although Marguerite was suffered to remain unrivalled mistress of the gaieties and splendour of the court, even to the exclusion of Queen Claude herself — who, engrossed with her children, cared not to dispute with a sister whom she tenderly loved, for supremacy over a court in which her virtues were not appreciated, and where her want of personal attractions subjected her to daily mortifications.

Great events, nevertheless, were preparing during the remainder of this year, 1518. Reverses, too, were at hand; for Francis had attained the summit of his prosperity. Every obstacle had, as yet, bent before his indomitable energy; nothing hitherto resisted, or dared long to oppose the king's despotic will. The emperor, the pope, the Swiss, the house of Sforza, the parliament, the Sorbonne — each had been compelled humbly to submit to his dictation. Soon a new antagonistic power, stronger than that wielded by Francis, brought about a reaction; and a monarch entered the lists to contest with him for supremacy over Europe, reared in the school of adversity, and whose elevation, step by step, to power had been achieved by the exercise of calm caution, subtle policy, and steady perseverance, — qualities which, unhappily, the king of France possessed not in sufficient degree for his own glory and for the prosperity of his subjects.

The parliament of Paris, meanwhile, cowed, yet not subdued, maintained a sullen silence. The unity of the Sorbonne was no

[1] Éloges des Enfans de France, par le P. Hilarion de Coste, p. 74.

more ; that great body, broken into factions, filled the capital with clamours. At war within itself, its turbulent syndic, Béda, alternately attacked Lefèvre and his party, and then directed the fierceness of his eloquence in burning tirades against the lukewarm zeal displayed by the supporters of the papal interest within the university. Irresolute, and somewhat intimidated, the Sorbonne temporized ; but no restraint was placed on the lectures of Lefèvre, and crowds of students daily attended to learn wisdom from the lips of the eloquent doctor of Étaples.

The doctrines which from the year 1512 had convulsed the university now resounded from the very centre of Germany. Martin Luther, the obscure Augustinian monk, by one bold manifesto affixed on the gates of the church at Wittemberg in the month of October, 1517, attracted upon himself and his cause the attention of the princes, potentates, and universities of Europe. The shameless traffic of indulgences in Germany, sanctioned by Pope Leo X., — a kind of tax levied on the faithful for the double purposes of building the Church of St. Peter's, of defraying the licentious pleasures of the Vatican, and of enabling the pope to portion his sister Madelaine,[1] consort of the Prince Cibo, — created scandal throughout Christendom. The impious harangues of Leo's agent, Tezel,[2] in the public markets and principal squares of the cities of Germany, appalled even the most ignorant.

Throughout Germany all was uproar and confusion, infidelity, or abject superstition. Luther raised his voice to strip from Rome the outward covering of her pompous ceremonial and imposing service. It was the beauty and gorgeousness of her external worship which alone fed the lingering spark of reverence for her authority in the hearts of the multitudes. This glory rent from her, the hollowness of the system, and the decay of every vital principle became exposed to the wondering eyes of Europe : beneath, the church stood forth a ruin ; and throughout the greater part of Germany the shattered edifice was allowed to crumble to the dust.

Early in the year 1519 another element of discord was hurled

[1] Madelaine de Medici, daughter of Lorenzo the Magnificent. Her husband, Prince Cibo, was a son of Pope Innocent VIII.

[2] Jean Tezel, or Tetzel, a Dominican monk, was born at Pirn, on the Elbe. He died A.D. 1519.

into the centre of distracted Germany, — the imperial crown. On the decease of the Emperor Maximilian, two competitors entered the field to contend for the diadem, — the grandson of the deceased emperor, Charles, King of Spain, and Francis I., King of France. The history of the causes and oversights on the part of Francis which led to the triumphant election of his rival to the throne of the Cæsars, belongs not to this biography, and therefore can only be cursorily glanced at here, as the commencement of that rivalry and unmitigated hatred of each other which embittered the lives, and marred the glory of both sovereigns. Dating from the election of Charles V. to the imperial throne, Francis could no longer claim the homage of Europe as the most powerful, magnificent, and fortunate of its monarchs. The youth of the King of France had been spent in splendour and affluence, under the guardianship of the most tender and devoted of mothers; his errors were faults resulting from a prosperous and unclouded career. Francis never had had occasion for the exercise of economy, prudence, and self-control. The liberality of Louis XII. was abundantly manifested towards him; while his versatile disposition and quickness of comprehension defied the efforts of his preceptor, De Boisy, to instil habits of studious application. Charles V., on the contrary, had been nurtured in poverty, in comparative obscurity, and by the hands of strangers. His father, the Archduke Philip,[1] died while he was yet in infancy; his mother, the eldest surviving daughter of the renowned Isabel of Castile, was a helpless lunatic confined in the castle of Tordesillas. Charles's paternal grandfather, the Emperor Maximilian, was a chivalrous prince, but thrifty, weak, irresolute; always boasting of his pacific intentions, and yet perpetually at war; poor in the midst of his parsimony; professing blind devotion to the see of Rome, and yet inflicting on the popedom its deepest wounds. A character composed of such contradictory elements was without parallel in Europe; and Maximilian found himself flattered and scorned, conciliated and little esteemed by its various potentates. Ferdinand,[2] king of Arragon, Charles's maternal grandfather, was a prince hated

[1] The Archduke Philip was born at Bruges, July 22d, 1478. He espoused Joanna, eldest surviving child and heiress of Ferdinand and Isabel of Spain, in the year 1496. Philip, on the decease of Queen Isabel, was proclaimed King of Castile, in 1506. He died three months after his accession.

[2] Ferdinand V. the Catholic, born 10th of March, 1452. He died A.D. 1516.

and feared for his craft and unscrupulous dealings, where Maximilian's foibles provoked derision. His policy in Spain, like that of Louis XI. in France, depressed the power of the great nobles; and his unflinching reformation of abuses prepared the way for his grandson's glorious reign. Possessing such relatives, no domestic ties softened the naturally gloomy disposition of the young archduke. Born the heir of a dozen crowns, he attained to manhood uncertain whether he should eventually inherit one of them. In Spain, his younger brother, Ferdinand's favourite grandson, rivalled him. Forbidden to visit the court of Madrid, Charles had the mortification to witness the progress which the young archduke was making, under the auspices of his grandfather, in winning the favour of the haughty Spanish nobility, who affected to regard Charles as a stranger to their country, and to its language and customs. One illustrious prelate, the Cardinal Ximénès,[1] remained true to the cause of the archduke; and this fidelity contributed much, eventually, to place the diadem of Spain on Charles's brow.

In Germany, the wavering policy of Maximilian, and the little respect paid to his will, rendered his grandson's elevation to the imperial throne more than doubtful. The Netherlands, meanwhile, a territory Charles inherited from his grandmother, Mary of Burgundy, and which was the only part of his vast inheritance that he held in present possession, threatened to transfer its allegiance to the crown of England, or to that of France; while the bold burghers of Ghent on more than one occasion had dared to invade the palace, and administer what they conceived to be wholesome counsel to their melancholy young sovereign. No brilliant court pageants, beautiful women, or relaxations such as had imparted life and vigour to the boyhood and youth of Francis, enlivened the studies and meditations of the Archduke Charles; but the silent musings, and the lonely solitudes of the palace at Brussels formed the future great emperor. His position taught him to be wary, cautious, and circumspect, and to court the friendship of the sovereigns of Europe; his ill-paid revenues, and the parsimony of his two grandfathers gave him painful, yet salutary, lessons in economy. He had need to exercise patience and forbearance; and unlike Francis he was obliged to labour

[1] François Ximénès de Cisneros was born in 1437. Created Archbishop of Toledo in 1495, and cardinal in 1507. Cardinal Ximénès died A.D. 1518, aged 81.

with unceasing perseverance to obtain not only his moderate desires, but his legitimate rights. Chièvres,[1] his preceptor, upon whom the archduke lavished all his regard, early accustomed him to study. When Charles attained the age of fifteen, Chièvres caused every state paper to be privately read and commented upon by the archduke before it was communicated to the council; if couriers arrived from the provinces in the middle of the night, the young prince rose to receive their reports, and the council never assembled except under his presidency.[2]

In his severe education, and the privations of his youth, lay the elements of Charles's future greatness; while to the same causes, and the isolation which shadowed his early youth, may be attributed the coldness and selfishness of his character. The archduke's personal appearance bore affinity to his mind; the strong, firmly knit figure, the constrained deportment, and the severe expression of his pale and melancholy face, contrasted as much with the majestic carriage and the handsome features of King Francis as did their respective dispositions and pursuits.

When the imperial diadem, the crowns of Spain, Naples, and the Indies, the sovereignty of Austria, the Low Countries, Flanders, Franche Comté, Bohemia, and Hungary, were united beneath his sceptre, Charles, like a noble eagle soaring aloft, free from the chain which had so long bound him to earth, prepared for a long and vigorous flight.

Francis received the news of his non-election to the empire with passionate threats of vengeance; while the emperor, apparently not the least elated by his elevation, greeted at Saragossa the deputies sent by the Diet to lay the imperial crown at his feet. One of Charles's first acts was to write a very humble letter to his incensed rival; he condescended, moreover, to indite another epistle to Anne de Montmorency, requesting him to interpose his good offices for the maintenance of peace between France and the empire. War, however, was inevitable between the two monarchs. The haughty and ambitious spirit of Francis felt too aggrieved at the preference shown to his rival. Irre-

[1] Guillaume de Croy, Seigneur de Chièvres, Duke de Soria, and knight of the Golden Fleece, preceptor of the Emperor Charles V., who created him viceroy of Spain, on his accession to the imperial crown. Chièvres died at Worms in 1521, aged 63.

[2] Du Bellay, p. 45.

spective of personal enmity, they had too many hereditary quarrels to vindicate, ever to be at a loss for a pretext to commence hostilities. By the treaty of Paris, Charles had pledged himself to restore Navarre to Henri d'Albret on his accession to the crown of Spain. This engagement the emperor evaded. He likewise refused to pay the sum of 100,000 golden ducats, which he had stipulated to give Francis in exchange for the cession of the rights that the latter possessed over the kingdom of Naples; and he declined to render homage to the King of France for the counties of Flanders and Artois. Charles, on his side, claimed from Francis the province of Burgundy, usurped by Louis XI. from his grandmother, Mary of Burgundy; he also asserted his rights to the duchy of Milan, as a fief of the empire, which the king had so recently wrested from the princes of the house of Sforza. With so many causes of complaint, and each of these princes being ambitious of becoming arbiters of the destinies of Europe, war soon broke forth, spreading with startling rapidity, until all Europe shrank appalled at the carnage and commotion, the deplorable results of the aggressions of its two most potent monarchs.

In order more effectually to combat the expected encroachments of the emperor, Francis determined on making common cause with Henry VIII. of England. An interview, therefore, was agreed upon between the two sovereigns; and the meeting took place in May of the ensuing year, 1520, between the towns of Ardres and Guines.[1] The Duchess d'Alençon accompanied Queen Claude and the Duchess d'Angoulême to this celebrated interview of the Field of the Cloth of Gold. Marguerite, however, took no prominent part in these festivities; and the court chroniclers of the day have it merely on record that she was present at the banquets and joustings which ensued. The interview passed in splendid revelries; but yet its political significance was deep. Henry VIII. aspired to be the arbiter between Francis and his potent rival, and with the greater right, as he conceived, because at this interview, solemn proclamation was made of the betrothment of the king's only daughter Mary, heiress presumptive of England, to the infant dauphin, Francis.[2] Henry took care to signify the position which he intended Eng-

[1] Mém. de Martin du Bellay, p. 87 ; Mém. de Fleuranges.
[2] Mém. de Fleuranges.

land to assume in the pending contest between the emperor and his rival, by causing the figure of an archer with a bent bow to be designed on the tapestry hangings at the door of his tent, with the motto, "Qui j'accompagne est maître."[1]

During the course of this year, 1520, Marguerite's favourite friend and former preceptress, Madame de Châtillon, resigned her office in the household of the duchess, and was succeeded by Louise de Daillon, wife of the grand sénéchal of Poitou, M. de la Chastaigneraye, — a lady much esteemed for her attainments and virtue. The sénéchale of Poitou possessed considerable influence with the king;[2] who, though his own excesses and example fatally lowered the tone of morals at court and throughout the kingdom, yet ever showed distinguished regard to those women whose purity and blameless deportment evinced feminine dignity and principle.

The cause of the retirement of Madame de Châtillon can only be conjectured. It is thought by some that she had deeply imbibed the reformed doctrines as taught by Lefèvre; and that fearing to compromise Marguerite, and yet unable conscientiously to check the decided bias which the princess manifested for these opinions, Madame de Châtillon suddenly announced her intention to retire from court. Another and less creditable explanation of Madame de Châtillon's retreat is afforded by the scandalous pen of Brantôme, who asserts that she cherished a *penchant* for the celebrated Cardinal du Bellay, and that after her retirement from court a secret, but of course illegal marriage united them.

Marguerite maintained great state at her brother's court. The Duke d'Alençon was wealthy; and amongst the numerous faults attributed to him, the vice of avarice is not laid to his charge. The duchess had her ladies-in-waiting, and six maids of honour, among whom, for a brief interval, was the unfortunate Anne Boleyn. She had also her chamberlains, chaplains, secretary, gentlemen-ushers, and *valets-de-chambre*. Marguerite retained likewise many literary men in her service, granting them pensions and honorary offices in her household.

After the resignation of Madame de Châtillon Marguerite no longer so carefully concealed her growing sympathy with the

[1] Mezeray, Abrég. Chron.

[2] Brantôme, Vie des Hommes Illustres, Discours xix.

reformed opinions. Perhaps the timid counsels of her former preceptress had hitherto restrained her; or Marguerite determined no longer to hide her participation in opinions which had been the means, lest she should be suspected of sharing them, of separating her from her dearest friend. Marguerite's learning enabled her to peruse the New Testament in its original language; she read there of faith, of the necessity of inward purity, and of devoted trust in God. She carefully, and with success, compared this doctrine with that propagated by Lefèvre and Luther, but in vain did she search in the book of inspired writ for the foundation upon which Rome reared its fabric. To a certain extent, Marguerite's opinions at this period were shared by her brother, and even by the Duchess d'Angoulême herself. But efficient aid was at hand for Marguerite: perplexed, and wavering, her exalted position, and her fear of the king's displeasure, forbade her to seek the solution of her doubts from the lips of Lefèvre; but from a quarter whence she least expected succour, from the ranks even of the Romish priesthood, there rose one, ere long, to be her guide and trusted friend, and whose exhortations inspired her with confidence and zeal.

Guillaume Briçonnet, Bishop of Meaux, was one of the most distinguished prelates of the Gallican Church. He was the eldest son of the Cardinal de St. Malo,[1] Count de Montbrun, who had entered the Church when a widower. The heir of vast wealth, and of an ancient title, Briçonnet had been destined for a political career. On the elevation, therefore, of his father to the see of St. Malo he assumed the title of his family, and appeared at the court of Louis XII. as Count de Montbrun. But the frivolities of the court proved so repulsive to Briçonnet's ardent, yet serious mind that he soon determined to follow his father's example, and relinquish his secular rank for the priestly office.

After his ordination Briçonnet passed rapidly through the

[1] Guillaume Briçonnet, Count de Montbrun, was created Cardinal de St. Malo by Alexander VI., in 1495. He had successively filled the sees of St. Malo, Nîsmes, and the archiepiscopal thrones of Rheims and Narbonne. Briçonnet was deprived of his dignity as cardinal by Julian II., for his adherence to the decrees of the Council of Pisa; but he was restored by Pope Leo X. The Cardinal de St. Malo died in 1514, leaving high renown as a churchman, a scholar, and a diplomatist. Of his two sons, one became Bishop of Meaux, and the other Bishop of St. Malo.

initiatory offices of the Church, and was elevated at once to the see of Lodève, and subsequently to that of Meaux. Twice, during the reign of Louis XII. the Bishop of Meaux was accredited to the court of Rome as ambassador extraordinary In the presence of the pope and the college of cardinals, Briçonnet eloquently vindicated the policy of Louis XII.; and reproached the Emperor Maximilian for his faithless policy and his evasion of treaties. The Bishop of Meaux, likewise, represented the Gallican Church at the councils of Pisa and of the Lateran.

Eloquent, and of courtly and imposing address, Briçonnet, with his wealth and learning, might have enacted a conspicuous rôle at the court of France; but, lowly-minded and devoid of ambition, the Bishop of Meaux, on his return from the various diplomatic missions confided to him by his sovereign, retired to his diocese, or sought refuge from the vanities of the court in his abbey of St. Germain des Près, where he employed his leisure in reforming the abuses, and in augmenting the library, of the monastery. Never was Briçonnet the companion of those insolent and luxurious prelates whose profligacy overthrew the Church in which they ministered. Yet, admirable as were the morals and piety of the Bishop of Meaux, he was not endowed with that firmness and constancy of spirit which enables some men, in days of persecution, to yield life rather than sacrifice an iota of God's truth. When personal danger assailed Briçonnet, his timid and temporizing nature shrank from conflict: his fear of the scorn of the world silenced the testimony he had borne to the purity of the principles taught by the most eminent of the reformers, and was the forerunner of his own fall, and of that sad apostasy in others which the errors and example of men eminent for their virtues, as was the Bishop of Meaux, too surely entails in every age. When Briçonnet returned to France, after the closing of the Council of Lateran, he found the universities full of debate and tumult. Astonished at the new doctrines, and at the rapid progress they had made during his absence in Rome, the Bishop of Meaux renewed his acquaintance with Lefèvre; for, being especially skilful in controversy, he desired to make himself conversant with the reformed tenets, for their subversion in his own diocese, where they had recently taken root. Lefèvre's answer to the earnest inquiries of Briçonnet was to

place the Bible in his hands. The spirit of the Bishop of Meaux was not that of a haughty and profane caviller, or sceptic, in sacred things. He perused the Scriptures with Lefèvre, and at once perceived that no analogy existed between the Romish system and the church of which he there read. A new source of happiness seemed to have dawned upon him. The fulness of the gospel salvation he never wearied of expatiating upon. "The savour of Divine food is so sweet," said the bishop afterwards in one of his letters to the Duchess d'Alençon, "that it renders the mind insatiable; the more one tastes, the more one desires it."

The Bishop of Meaux, however, much as his mind was penetrated with these truths, never contemplated a separation from the communion of the Church of Rome. A voluntary reform on her part was the movement upon which his hopes were fixed. Hundreds, even thousands of persons, like Briçonnet, in those days, felt the power and the truth of the great doctrines set forth by the reformers, and yet waited for Rome and her priesthood to take the initiative, instead of forcing her to reform, by a universal protest. Intimidated by her false pretences, they had not energy to expose her errors; they procrastinated, until at length the convictions, once so strong, waned in their minds, and left them captives to the darkness from which they had lacked courage to extricate themselves.

The Bishop of Meaux, nevertheless, full of zeal for the restoration of the Church to its primitive purity, determined to set the example by reforming the small section of it over which he presided. Towards the latter end of the year 1519 he quitted Paris, and repairing to his diocese, commenced a careful visitation throughout its various churches. He inquired into the life and doctrine of its preachers, and discovered that almost all the pulpits were filled by Franciscan monks from Meaux; while the vicars and curates spent their days in idle feastings and sloth, or expended their revenues in Paris. Shocked beyond measure, the bishop exhorted his renegade priests in vain. They were deaf to his entreaties, and ridiculed his zeal. Determined, nevertheless, to find a remedy for such scandalous disorders, Briçonnet forbade the pulpit throughout his diocese to the Franciscans, and convoked a synod of his clergy, to meet in the episcopal palace at Meaux. The bishop then ascertained that throughout his diocese there

were scarcely ten resident priests; and amongst the 127 curates delegated to perform the services during the absence of the rest in Paris, Briçonnet found fourteen only whom he approved of, and permitted to officiate in his diocese. The strictness with which the bishop now enforced ecclesiastical discipline speedily rendered him very unpopular amongst the ecclesiastics of his diocese; and so often was he thwarted by their dissensions and contumacy that he resolved to devote a portion of his wealth to the foundation of a college of theology at Meaux, which might supply him with men, fervent and enlightened, for the work of the ministry.

In carrying out his project, the bishop made frequent journeys to Paris, to consult with Lefèvre and with Marguerite, whose patronage for his intended college Briçonnet earnestly solicited. As one of her brother's most illustrious subjects, the Bishop of Meaux was well known to the Duchess d'Alençon before the similarity of their religious opinions created a bond of union between them that led to the voluminous correspondence still preserved. Briçonnet's letters to the duchess breathe a spirit of fervent piety; his style, however, is diffuse, obscure, and so disfigured by the constant use of metaphor as in many instances to require serious study to divine his meaning. Many of the letters are of astonishing length. Sometimes, at the opening of his epistle, the bishop commences a discussion on one or other of the mysteries of the faith, under the form of some familiar symbol, and pursues his metaphor through ten or twelve pages, until he fairly bewilders himself in the mazes of his allegory. This unfortunate tendency to an affected mysticism in doctrine and style impaired the bishop's usefulness; it furnished, besides, at a later day, unusual facility of accusation to his enemies of the Sorbonne, when their fanatic zeal became kindled by the reforms which he introduced throughout his diocese.

There is no doubt that Marguerite owed her perfect instruction in the doctrine of the reformers to the zeal of the bishop of Meaux. She appears to have been sincerely attached to him, and to have enthusiastically entered into his schemes of reform. Briçonnet addresses the duchess with the authority of his ecclesiastical rank; he advises, remonstrates, comforts, and exhorts her in his letters; and recommends resignation to her earthly lot, and perseverance in promoting the prosperity of the Church, by a judicious exercise of her influence over the king and Madame.

A predatory warfare, meantime, broke out on the frontiers of Champagne,— the excesses committed by their respective troops being repudiated by both sovereigns, who were each unwilling to give the signal for a general onslaught. Francis, however, prepared for a conflict which he perceived was inevitable, divided his kingdom into four great divisions; to the Duke d'Alençon he intrusted the defence of Champagne; he gave the government of Picardy to the Duke de Vendôme; Guyenne to the Admiral de Bonnivet; and the preservation of the Milanese the king committed to the Marshal de Lautrec. The little principality of Sedan was the first theatre of hostilities; it belonged to Robert de la Mark, who, upon some frivolous pretext, had broken his allegiance to the emperor, and transferred it to Francis. The emperor despatched an army, under the Count de Nassau, to punish De la Mark's revolt. The territory of Sedan was soon ravaged and conquered; but, instead of contenting himself with this signal vengeance, the Count de Nassau crossed the River Cher, and laid siege to the French town of Mouzon.[1]

Hostilities were now fairly commenced. The emperor, with his immense resources, was equal to a contest however prolonged; his levies were raised with caution and deliberation; for the aids which he received from his subjects for the prosecution of the war flowed slowly, though unfailingly, into his exchequer. Francis, on the contrary, by the system of arbitrary taxation, and the various methods resorted to by the sovereigns of France to raise funds in the time of war, could command immense levies, and pour an overwhelming force into the field. Hence arose the almost universal successes which first attended the French arms. Charles suffered his impetuous rival to exhaust his finances, and then vindicated his own more prudent policy, by constant triumphs over his enemies, who rarely retained their conquests longer than throughout one campaign.

The Duchess d'Alençon, meanwhile, beheld with sorrow and anxiety the warlike preparations and the intestine divisions which convulsed her country. She shared not in her brother's sanguine hopes of humiliating the rival who had wrested from him an imperial diadem; she looked in dismay on the bloodshed and the calamities about to overwhelm France. Division reigned in the universities, the parliament, the Church, the state, and the

[1] Mém. de Fleuranges.

court; all things seemed tending to some momentous crisis. The triumph of the zealots of the Sorbonne over Lefèvre and his friends cast a gloom also over Marguerite's spirit. Marguerite at this period stood singularly alone in the midst of her brother's court. Francis and Louise were absorbed by their warlike preparations; and Madame had issued commands that the court from day to day should hold itself in readiness to accompany the king as far as Troyes, or Meaux, on his route to join the army of Champagne. The Duke d'Alençon also was about to leave to take the command of the troops destined for the defence of Champagne. Marguerite's advice was sought on many occasions at this period by her brother, who relied on her counsel and quickness of perception; she gave her opinions with fear and consternation, for the ominous aspect of affairs filled her with alarm. Marguerite likewise felt great anxiety that her husband should discharge the high trust reposed in him by the king, perhaps at her personal solicitation, with energy and ability. All these various circumstances preyed on the mind of the duchess; in her distress she turned to the Bishop of Meaux for consolation; and before the court quitted Blois for Champagne, Marguerite wrote thus to Briçonnet: —

LETTER OF THE DUCHESS D'ALENÇON TO THE BISHOP OF MEAUX.[1]

M. DE MEAUX, — Knowing that one thing only is necessary, I address you, to entreat you will be, by prayer, the means that God may please to lead, according to his good pleasure, M. d'Alençon, who, by the king's command, sets out as lieutenant-general in his army, which, I doubt, will not come off without war. And, moreover, because that peace and victory are alone God's gifts, I pray you supplicate him for this mercy. Believing, also, that besides the public weal of the kingdom, you desire earnestly the duke's welfare and mine, I likewise beseech your spiritual aid, for I am obliged to meddle in many things that cause me much fear. To-morrow, also, my Aunt de Nemours departs for Savoy; she desires to unite her remembrances to you with my own. Wherefore, if you thought the time propitious for Master Michel to make a journey hither, it would be a great consolation to me, which, as I only desire it for the honour of God, I leave to your discretion and to his.

La toute vostre,

MARGUERITE.

[1] Supplément François MS., Bibl. Royale, No. 337, vol. i.

Michel d'Arande, whose aid the duchess sought, was chaplain to the Bishop of Meaux, and one of the most learned and zealous of the men whom the bigotry of the Sorbonne had driven from Paris. He was busily engaged at Meaux, under the protection of Briçonnet, in preparing a translation in French of the Epistles of St. Paul. Marguerite subsequently took him into her own service, and made him her first chaplain and almoner.

In compliance with Marguerite's request, Briçonnet despatched D Arande as the bearer of his answer to the duchess. He found the court sojourning at Troyes, at which place the king waited the news of the repulse of the Imperialists from before the city of Mezières, which the Count de Nassau had besieged. The bishop, who knew the fears and misgivings which assailed the heart of Marguerite, strove in his reply to encourage her. If Marguerite were cast down and discouraged, what then would become of the great cause of reform, which he had so much at heart? In his earnest endeavour to comfort the duchess, and to revive her drooping spirit, Briçonnet writes without that superabundance of metaphor which renders the majority of his letters nearly unintelligible. After exhorting Marguerite to place her confidence in God, the bishop says in his reply: "It is war, Madame, that the gracious Jesus tells us in the Gospel, he came to send on earth; and also fire that transforms earthliness into divinity. I desire with all my heart to aid you, Madame; but from my own helplessness, expect nothing but the will. Whoso has faith, hope, and love, has all that is necessary, and no need of aid or succour. God alone is everything, and out of him can nothing be found. To fight, take to you the great giant, insuperable love. The war is led by love. Jesus demands the presence of the heart: wretched is he who withdraws from him. Whoso fights in person is sure of victory. Often he falls who fights by proxy." [1] It is difficult to say what degree of comfort this letter gave the duchess. Michel d'Arande, however, obtained the bishop's permission to make as long a sojourn at court as Marguerite desired.

Anne de Montmorency, whose career the Duchess d'Alençon watched with unceasing interest, and the Chevalier Bayard, were the brave defenders of Mezières. The war was carried on by the Imperialists with the most reckless violence. They burned and

[1] MS. Bibl. Royale, S. F. 337. The bishop's letter is dated June 12, 1521.

pillaged all the small and defenceless towns through which they marched, slaying the inhabitants, priests, women, and children, with remorseless cruelty.[1] The place held out for a month, when the king advanced, leading the main body of the army to its relief; and, through the bravery of the besieged, was able to throw a succour of 1,000 men into the city. The Imperialists then decamped, and, baffled in Champagne, turned their attack upon Picardy.

The court had journeyed to Meaux when news of the retreat of the Imperialists from before Mezières was brought in a letter from the king to the Duchess d'Angoulême. Marguerite, who never omitted to perform a gracious action, wrote to the Baron de Montmorency[2] to assure him of his son's safety, charging her messenger to detail the incidents connected with the siege.

The duchess was now at Meaux, residing with her mother in the episcopal palace, the guest of Briçonnet. She was surrounded by men whose principles she warmly approved; but whom as yet, out of deference to her brother, she had not admitted to her intimacy. Doubtless now, if never before, Marguerite was present at the lectures of Lefèvre, and heard and applauded that zeal and eloquence in the exposition of the Holy Scriptures, which electrified the universities. For a moment the proud heart of the Duchess d'Angoulême seemed touched by the truths carefully brought before her by her daughter; and she expressed a wish to become more conversant with the Bible. With sanguine hope the Bishop of Meaux redoubled his labours, and urged D'Arande to greater speed, in order that a part of the Gospel, and the Epistles of St. Paul, might be ready to present to the king's mother in the French language before the cares of government should efface the precious wish from the heart of the duchess. The impression made on Louisa's mind, however, proved evanescent; and by the time that Briçonnet's translation of the Epistles was complete, her versatile and inconstant spirit displayed as much aversion to the study of the "new doctrines" as she then appeared inclined to favour their diffusion.

[1] In a letter written by Francis I., MSS. de Béthune, No. 8467, he details the cruelties perpetrated by the army under the Count de Nassau.

[2] M. de Montmorency was chamberlain to the Duchess d'Angoulême. He had temporarily retired from the court to his castle of Ecouen on account of indisposition.

After a sojourn of eight days at Meaux the duchess with her daughters, Claude and Marguerite, journeyed to St. Germain-en-Laye, to meet the king, who, after paying them a brief visit, rejoined the army in pursuit of the Imperial forces, then in full retreat upon Valenciennes. It was cheering to Marguerite to hear of the good service which her husband was rendering to the king. The most meritorious era in the life of the Duke d'Alençon was, undoubtedly, while invested with the supreme command of the troops for the defence of Champagne. His bravery and activity contributed greatly to the success of the French arms during this campaign. Acting as the lieutenant of Francis, he led the succours for the relief of Mezières, and by his timely arrival saved the garrison from a disastrous capitulation. He retook the town of Mouzon, captured by the Imperialists at the commencement of the campaign; and, by a forced march, traversed the country, and united his division of troops to the main army under the king, who was advancing upon the town of Valenciennes, in eager hope of combating the emperor in person.[1]

Conferences at Calais continued to be holden throughout the war on the frontiers of the Netherlands. Wolsey was accepted as sole arbiter of the respective differences between the two monarchs. Francis despatched the Chancellor Duprat, the President de Selve, the Maréchal de Chabannes, and Robert Gédoyn, to negotiate this important peace. The Imperial plenipotentiaries were the Chancellor Gattinara, the Count de Bergues, the Abbé de St. Bertin, and as secretaries of legation, two very learned Flemish jurisconsults.[2] The conferences were conducted with the greatest indecorum; and, if the ambassadors of both powers did not prove themselves able diplomatists, they might have challenged Europe to produce greater adepts in angry disputation and invective. Their usual mode of proceeding was to meet in conference, Cardinal Wolsey proposing the point needing adjustment; this they proceeded at first to debate with the gravity becoming the representatives of the most potent princes of Christendom, till, gradually excited by argument, a violent altercation ensued, and the meeting invariably broke up in tumult. One day, in the presence of Wolsey, Duprat declared, with his usual vehemence, that he would forfeit his head if the king his

[1] Mém. de Martin du Bellay. [2] Gailliard, Hist. de François I.

master had aided the lord of Sedan in his revolt against the emperor, which was the ostensible cause of the war. The Chancellor Gattinara rose from his seat, and loudly exclaimed: "I demand, then, the head of the Chancellor of France, for I have here letters that prove the secret connivance of Francis I. in the treason of Robert de la Mark." "My head is my own yet," replied Duprat, scornfully, "for I have with me the originals of the letters to which you refer, and they do not justify the interpretation which you put upon them." Gattinara frowned, and after satirically glancing at the portly figure of the French chancellor, angrily replied: "If I had won your head, you might keep it. I would rather have a boar's head which would at least be eatable, and therefore worth something!"[1] Wolsey burst into loud and prolonged laughter; but afterwards hastily changed the discussion. Little, indeed, as it proved, could France expect to be beholden to ambassadors who thus forfeited all dignity, and claim to personal respect.

News at length reached Calais of the renewed success of the French arms in Navarre, and of the capture of the strong fort of Fontarabia by the Admiral de Bonnivet. The emperor declined to treat longer for peace unless the place were first restored; Francis peremptorily refused to cede his conquest, and the negotiation was finally brought to a close. The plenipotentiaries separated in October, of the year 1521, having agreed upon nothing but an insignificant convention for the better regulation of the fisheries appertaining to the three powers.

The emperor, meanwhile, having joined his army at Valenciennes, Francis pursued his advantage, and after driving the Imperialists from the French frontiers, threw a bridge across the Scheldt, and succeeded in crossing the river in the very face of the Count de Nassau, and a strong detachment sent by Charles to dispute his passage. Had this advance been followed up by an immediate attack on the Imperial army, commanded by the emperor in person, the events of that day might have reversed the destinies of the rival monarchs; unfortunately, Francis was persuaded, against the advice of the Constable de Bourbon, and the most experienced of his generals, to pass the subsequent night in inaction. The morning dawned, and Charles had fled, attended by a hundred horsemen, and sought refuge in one of his

[1] MSS. de Béthune, No. 8179, Bibl. Roy.

strong towns in Flanders.[1] The authors of this counsel, it is stated, were the Duke d'Alençon, and the Marshal de Chabannes. Francis on this day also committed another fatal mistake for the glory of France, in giving the command of the vanguard of the army in crossing the Scheldt to the Duke d'Alençon, to the prejudice of de Bourbon, who claimed the honour in virtue of his office of constable.

Satisfied with the glory of having compelled his Imperial rival to flee before the *fleur-de-lis*, Francis, after securing the frontiers, and relieving Tournay, quitted the army and returned to St. Germain-en-Laye. The remainder of the campaign before the winter set in passed in skirmishes, — the only conquest of note effected by the French arms being the storming and sack of the town of Hesdin.

Marguerite's correspondence with the Bishop of Meaux continued with but little intermission during her brother's absence. It is to be deplored that the interest of this correspondence is so marred by the extravagances of Briçonnet's style. The most incomprehensible metaphors, abstruse erudition, and singular flights of mystical transport, confound the reader at every page. Yet, in his day, the Bishop of Meaux was regarded as a marvel of eloquence. When Briçonnet deigns to descend from the soaring altitude of his similes and parables, nothing can be more edifying and touching than his exhortations to the duchess, bidding her take comfort and persevere in the good path. If Marguerite in her reply, however, unfortunately used a figurative word or phrase, Briçonnet relapses into his favourite foible; and the next letter to the duchess arrives replete with Latin quotations and obscure allegories, which, whatever might have been the capacity of the people for their comprehension in Marguerite's days, almost defy perusal in these. For instance, in one of the letters which passed between Briçonnet and the duchess, apparently soon after her departure from Meaux, Marguerite unguardedly used the image of "a flame" to illustrate her meaning. The bishop hastens to send her in reply thirty-six closely-written pages, throughout which he does nothing but fluctuate with ludicrous perseverance between dissertations on fire, heat, torrents, and on the breath of life, which shall kindle the flaming fire of faith. "Madame," continues he, emphatically; "*qui est désert, en désert, est abymé;*

[1] Mém. de Du Bellay; Mezeray, Abrég. Chron.

cherchant désert, et ne le peut trouver, et quand le trouve, est pardessus empêché, et mauvais guide pour guider autrui hors du désert et le conduyre au désert désiré," etc.

Marguerite, in despair at the subtleties and enigmas of her friend, writes, in answer to this rhapsody, to entreat Briçonnet to adopt greater simplicity of style. Nevertheless, in her letter, it will be seen, the duchess attempts to assimilate her language to the mystical sublimities so much in vogue with the bishop.

LETTER OF THE DUCHESS D'ALENÇON TO THE BISHOP OF MEAUX.

The poor wanderer cannot understand the good which is to be found in the desert, for lack of knowing that she is benighted there. I pray you that in this desert, out of affection and pity you will not hasten forwards so swiftly that you cannot be followed, in order that the abyss, through the abyss which you invoke, may not engulf the poor wanderer.

MARGUERITE.

The bishop, in his reply, pays no regard to Marguerite's pathetic entreaty. With eager avidity he seizes the idea of "the abyss" which she had unluckily suggested, and plays upon the word through every spiritual simile to which it might be applied, throughout a letter of enormous length. Briçonnet's letters must have afforded Marguerite much wonder and perplexity. She was, however, deeply in earnest; and, amidst the bishop's eccentricities, she detected the current of fervent piety and devotion which so eminently adorned his character. His exhortations, likewise, when divested of the dross which marred their beauty and worth, were calculated to inspire the duchess with renewed courage to contend with the difficulties that surrounded her. At this period it is more than probable that the Bishop of Meaux was her only counsellor, and to him alone she confided the doubt and the weaknesses by which she was assailed. Many must have been Marguerite's compunctions of conscience when, by her position at court, she found herself compelled to sanction things repugnant to her principles; and when her duty to God clashed with her devoted affection for her brother.

Marguerite's good and pious resolutions, though at this time they were not encouraged by the avowed approbation of her mother and the king, did not meet with decided opposition and

discountenance. The inquiring mind of the Duchess d'Angoulême was roused to investigate the "new doctrines," which had had power and weight to kindle dissension and controversy throughout Europe; while the king, whose religion was comprised in the due observance of the outward ceremonies of the church, looked upon the men whom his universities denounced, as learned enthusiasts and dreamers, whose supposed aggressions occupied the turbulent Sorbonne and parliament, which, without something to combat on their own arena, would be perpetually interfering in the government. It was an acknowledged fact, likewise, that the most learned men of Europe were infected, more or less, with the new opinions; so that Francis, the universal patron of literature, found himself obliged either to tolerate the sectarians, or to renounce for his kingdom that repute for science and learning which he so ardently coveted.

Michel d'Arande, meanwhile, accompanied the Duchess d'Alençon from Meaux to St. Germains, and remained at court until the close of the year (1521). His exhortations appear to have made considerable impression on the mind of the king's mother. In a letter addressed to the Bishop of Meaux, which for some reason Marguerite dictated to her secretary, the duchess added this postscript with her own hand: "I do not know whether I ought not to rejoice at being reckoned of the number of those whom I most wish to resemble.[1] It seems to be wiser, nevertheless, at present, to close the mouth of the ignorant, assuring *you that the king and Madame have* deliberated, and are fully resolved to show that the truth of God is not heresy."

Briçonnet became, at length, impatient for the return of his energetic chaplain, Michel d'Arande. Marguerite writes again to excuse his delay, and to assure the bishop that his chaplain's time has been well employed in impressing the truths which they were so anxious to disseminate, in the highest quarters. After a grateful allusion to the benefit which she derived from Briçonnet's letters, the Duchess d'Alençon proceeds thus: —

"Like sweet manna they (the bishop's letters) fall, the benefit of which I do not greedily retain without imparting a portion to those who, in this company, I perceive are desirous of participating. And to solicit a greater abundance still, I send you back Master Michel,

[1] Marguerite had been accused of being a disciple of Luther and Lefèvre.

who, I assure you, has not lost his time here; for the Spirit of our Lord, through his preaching, has smitten the souls of many inclined to receive that Holy Spirit, as he will tell you; besides several other things that I have requested him to render you an account of, knowing well that you regard his word above doubt. I pray you that, amid all your fervent desires for the reformation of the Church, which *more and more the king and Madame earnestly desire*, and your care for the salvation of all benighted souls, you will not forget to intercede in behalf of that imperfect, ill-shaped, and counterfeit pearl,[1]

MARGUERITE.

In the court were many secret converts to the reformed doctrines: and the little tracts written and distributed abroad by Lefèvre and his colleagues, were eagerly bought and perused, by some for their novelty, by others for the truths there forcibly set forth. Madame de Châtillon was suspected of yielding a cordial assent to the doctrines of reform; while the lukewarm zeal of the Cardinal du Bellay, her intimate friend, was viewed with distrust and suspicion by the adherents of the popedom, who trembled lest at no very distant day the cardinal's unrivalled ability and eloquence might be turned against them. The aim of the Bishop of Meaux at this period was to obtain from the king, from the Duchess d'Angoulême, or from Marguerite herself, some decided and public proof of their sympathy with the reformers. Briçonnet knew that the example and sanction of one of these, the first personages in the realm, would produce a mighty manifestation throughout the kingdom favourable to the cause of reform. In his reply to the letter written by the duchess, last quoted, the bishop tries to stir up Marguerite's zeal; he addresses her in a strain of mingled severity, reproach, and sorrow for her lukewarm adhesion to the reformed doctrines, which she still shrank from openly confessing. It was her love and deference for the king which impaired her implicit obedience.

"Madame," writes the bishop,[2] "it is to you I speak. The true fire has so long glowed in your heart, and in that of the

[1] MS. S. F. Bibl. Roy., fol. 46. The Duchess d'Alençon alludes to her name, — "Marguerite" meaning "a pearl" in the Spanish language. The bishop had written to her a letter descanting on pearls, round and pear-shaped, perfect and imperfect. The above is an extract of the duchess's answer.

[2] MS. Bibl. Roy., fol. 98. The bishop's letter is dated, Meaux, 22d of December, 1521.

king, and Madame, by mercy so infinite and abundant that I know of none surpassing it. I do not know whether this fire has not now been quenched and subdued, I will not say extinguished, for God in His mercy has not yet abandoned you. But confer each one of you with his heart (for none but yourselves can judge), and say whether you have allowed this fire to burn according to the grace vouchsafed to you. I fear that you have unworthily delayed and procrastinated. I praise God that he has inspired the king to execute that good thing which I have heard. In doing this he will prove himself a true lieutenant-general of that great Fire (God), who has given him such signal and great graces, in order to manifest their burning ardour in his government and the kingdom; for princes are only viceroys and lieutenants of the King of kings. I desire, with all my heart, madame, that you may be all three true salamanders [1] of God, — that according to the device, so may be its effects, — and your deeds very Christian, remembering that to whom much is given, more is required."

Yet the Duchess d'Alençon needed not the exhortations of the zealous Bishop of Meaux, to increase her devotion. One incautious step on her part, Marguerite apprehended, would forever wreck the cause that she had so much at heart. If a contest with the Roman Church were prematurely evoked, she felt that all was lost; the thunders of Rome had still power to awe the puissant monarch of France. The throne of Naples, — the suzerainty of Milan were at stake; the spiritual power of the pope might be safely derided, but his political influence remained still in the ascendant. If the king's sister, then, openly avowed her sympathy with the so-called sectarians, the pope, the Sorbonne, the parliament, the irate clergy, — all would unite in reclamation to the king to put down heresy throughout his dominions; and Marguerite dreaded then lest the edict so clamorously demanded would not be denied. Her influence could still do much; the respect and homage paid to her understanding, and the love borne towards her, might silently and safely serve the cause of reform.

The state of Marguerite's mind at this period, perhaps, cannot

[1] The bishop alludes to the device of Francis I., — a salamander.

be better described than in the following lines of her own composition : —

Je cherche aultant la croix et la désire
Comme aultrefoys je l'ay voulu fuir ;
Je cherche aultant par tourment d'en jouyr
Comme aultrefoys j'ay craint sur dur martyre,
Car cette croix mon âme à Dieu attire ;
C'est le chemin très seur pour l'aller voir,
Parquoy les biens qu'au monde puis avoir
Quitter je veulx, la croix me doibt suffire.[1]

[1] Huictain, composé par la Reine de Navarre, Suppl. fr. 2286, fol. 119, Bibl. Roy.

CHAPTER VI.

TIDINGS of the disastrous reverses of the French arms in Italy, added to the embarrassments of Francis at the close of the year 1521. Milan was lost, and for the honour of France, it had to be regained at any cost or sacrifice. On the line of frontier between France and the Imperial dominions, an expensive *cordon* of forts and military depôts had to be maintained to defend the kingdom from invasion. A war with Henry VIII. of England was now inevitable; and, with an empty exchequer, these calamities were about to overwhelm France. The king still heedlessly continued the round of his pleasures. Accompanied by his court, he journeyed from palace to palace; displaying, wherever he went, almost fabulous pomp and magnificence. His purveyors preceded him; and the king, if it pleased him to halt in the most remote and impoverished hamlet in his dominions, found there awaiting him the luxuries and the refinements of Amboise. "It was one round of tournaments, joustings, masquerades, and costly entertainments, such as not even those of Lucullus ever approached," says Brantôme.[1] The king, whether for the moment abiding in a village, a town, or in the midst of a forest, had six tables spread for the entertainment of the court; and all was ruled with the same ceremonious etiquette and lavish magnificence as at the Tournelles in Paris.

Money, however, was needed to support this extravagance, to defray the ruinous costs of the war, and to satiate the avarice of the Duchess d'Angoulême. In this emergency, the king applied to his sister for aid. Marguerite would have given her life for her brother; and she exerted herself so effectually that she persuaded her husband, the Duke d'Alençon, to send to the royal mint, to be coined into money, silver vessels to the amount of

[1] Vie de François I.

four thousand five hundred and ninety-five livres Tournois.[1] The duke was very wealthy, and Marguerite gloried in affording this assistance to her brother.

The Chancellor Duprat, meanwhile, was dexterously devising plans for the revival of the finances. Fertile in resources, and daring in execution, the chancellor never suffered himself to be arrested in a scheme, however novel and illegal, upon which he had once resolved. Deaf to remonstrance, he put down clamour by arbitrary authority; he despised agitation; and fearlessly defied the seditious murmurs of the parliament and the people. Every office became venal and was put up to sale, to fall to the highest bidder. Fresh places were created; new officers were foisted on the courts of law; and charges, formerly confided to a single individual, were divided, and became the prey of numbers. With an audacious defiance of public opinion, Duprat carried everything before him. Supported by the Duchess d'Angoulême, he unscrupulously applied himself to fill the empty coffers of the state, despite the remonstrances and protests which flowed upon him for the illegality and injustice of his measures. The Concordat allowed the chancellor to lay sacrilegious hands on the benefices and on the riches of the Gallican Church. Then began the active sale of bishoprics and benefices, so confidently predicted by the parliament and the Sorbonne, when the Concordat lay before them. "Thenceforward, the king," says Cornero, the Venetian ambassador, "began to distribute bishoprics, at the solicitation of the ladies of the court, and to give abbeys to his soldiers; so that they trafficked at the court of France in bishoprics and abbeys, as in Venice they do in pepper and cinnamon."[2]

This profane dealing gave Marguerite intense regret, with her veneration for sacred things. Great was her disappointment that her entreaties, and Briçonnet's exhortation had not rendered her mother and the king favourable to the growth of religion amongst the flippant and depraved courtiers. Yet, as she gazed around upon the incongruous elements of which her brother's court was composed, the sight must have disheartened the duchess, and

[1] On the decease of the Duke d'Alençon, Marguerite resigned her claims to the repayment of this sum to the duke's heirs. Her deed of resignation is dated December 22, 1548.

[2] Mathieu, Hist. de François I.

made her despair of effecting a reformation in the licentious circle. There was on one side the king, with his light, joyous *insouciance*, and his carelessness of all save the externals of religion; the queen, with her gentle, much-enduring meekness, her attachment to the faith of Rome, and her utter want of influence and consideration in that court over which her mother, Queen Anne de Bretagne, reigned with so imperious a sway; and last, though not least in power, the beautiful and frail Countess de Châteaubriand, the king's mistress, who first was prevailed upon to bear that title openly, before the whole court, unabashed by the presence of the injured queen. There was then the Duchess d'Angoulême, and Duprat, Robertet, and those whom Louisa favoured and advanced at her son's court, — all clever, unscrupulous, irreligious men, whose creed was comprised in the word "expediency;" who were devoted to the duchess, as they recognized a kindred spirit in the hard, comprehensive, and inquiring mind that flinched not at obstacles; and which, with unerring sagacity, achieved its resolves, at whatever sacrifice of justice and integrity. The Duchess d'Angoulême and her coterie were the *esprits forts* of the court. Religion afforded them a theme for speculation; and the doctrines which shook Europe to its centre were to them no more than subtle disquisitions, curious as subjects of investigation, that hereafter might be profitably employed for the better elucidation of the science of government. Marguerite herself shone like a pure and beautiful star in the midst of the profligate court, the only bright and hopeful object which relieved the darkness prevailing there. Assailed by so many adversaries, well might the pious Bishop of Meaux tremble for Marguerite's constancy, and therefore be ceaseless in his exhortations to kindle her faith and perseverance. "Madame,"[1] wrote he about this time to the Duchess d'Alençon, "I humbly beseech God that He will be pleased, in His goodness, to kindle a fire in the hearts of the king, of Madame, and of you; so that from you three may go forth a burning fire that shall light up the rest of the kingdom, and especially that order of men (the priesthood) by whose coldness all the others are frozen." The duchess, daily witnessing the indifference and corruption which surrounded her, could not participate in the bishop's hopes. Downcast and bewildered, the deepest sadness seems to have

[1] MS., Bibl. Roy.

possessed Marguerite at this season. Duprat, with his relentless severity, menaced her friends; and calamity after calamity appeared to smite her idolized brother. At the time when Marguerite commenced her reply to the Bishop of Meaux with the melancholy words, "The days are so cold, the heart so icy chill," the Sorbonne threatened annihilation to the propagators of the reformed doctrines; and the rebellion of the Constable de Bourbon shook the throne of France itself, and almost snatched the sceptre from her brother's hand.

The defection of the constable was the work of the Duchess d'Angoulême. Her unjustifiable detention of money from the Treasury, unknown to her son, entailed the loss of the Milanese; her unscrupulous mode of replenishing the coffers of the state — a design adopted not from patriotic motives, but to assuage her vindictive resentment — drew down upon France the captivity of the king, and miseries of unspeakable magnitude. Before her son's accession, Louisa had bestowed her patronage and protection on the Duke de Bourbon. She had aided him to obtain the hand of his cousin, the Princess Suzanne, by which alliance the duke entered into undisputed possession of the vast inheritance of Bourbon. On the accession of Francis, the Duchess d'Angoulême caused the sword of constable to be bestowed upon her protégé; and her favour elevated him to the highest distinction at court. In return for these benefits the duchess expected implicit devotion and obedience to her wishes. Ardent and impulsive, Louisa scorned to receive from the constable that homage he was alone willing to render, — the obedience and formal deference owing to her as the mother of his sovereign and his own liberal patroness. Louisa was haughty and imperious; the duke reckless and arrogant: both scorned to conciliate; and both, by the bitter irony of their words, and their contemptuous slights, rendered the disunion between them irreparable from its very commencement. The constable's cold, proud, and taciturn disposition was peculiarly distasteful to the king, who loved to rally his courtiers, and to receive from them, in return, good-humoured repartee. The duchess aggravated this displeasure and alienation; and through her counsels, at the passage of the Scheldt, the king, in order to humiliate the constable, took from him the command of the advanced guard of the army, to bestow it on the Duke d'Alençon. This indignity rankled in the heart of Bourbon: he

nevertheless dissembled; and on the birth of an heir to his proud name, the constable requested the king to stand sponsor to the infant prince. This event occurred early in the year 1522. Francis, perhaps wishing to conciliate the duke, who immediately on the cessation of hostilities angrily retired from court, granted his petition, and repaired to Moulins, attended by his court, to be present at the christening of the young heir of Bourbon.[1] At a season when a ruinous war impended, and the state was on the eve of bankruptcy, the constable had the imprudence to display before his sovereign, and that sovereign's avaricious and unscrupulous chancellor, a magnificence which paled even the splendours of the French court. For upwards of a week the duke entertained his guests in his city of Moulins with regal pomp: there were festivals, tournaments, banquets, at which vessels of gold and silver glistened; while chamberlains, knights, and gentlemen were at their post, in attendance on the duke and his consort, with the precision and etiquette of a court. The galleries, occupied by the ladies during the tourneys, were built of fragrant woods, and incrusted with jewels; flags of richest silks, blazoned with the arms and cognizance of Bourbon, everywhere eclipsed the royal banners. "The entertainment was so sumptuous," says Brantôme,[2] "that a king of France could not have matched it, for the tourneys, masquerades, dances, and for concourse of noblemen, the adherents of Bourbon, of whom there were an extraordinary number." Five hundred of these noblemen, in attendance on the duke, were arrayed in crimson velvet, which at that time was an article of great cost; and each of them wore a gold chain passed thrice round his neck.[3]

Francis beheld this pomp with surprise and displeasure; the Duchess d'Angoulême viewed it with mingled feelings of envy, approbation, and astonishment; while the Chancellor Duprat revolved the means of transferring to the royal exchequer a portion of the duke's superabundant wealth.

About a fortnight after the departure of the court from Moulins, the child at whose baptism this lavish splendour had been displayed died; and was followed to the grave a few months later by his mother, Suzanne, Duchess de Bourbon.[4]

[1] Brantôme, Hommes Illustres, Vie du Connétable de Bourbon.
[2] Vie des Hommes Illustres. [3] Ibid.
[4] Capefigue, Hist. de François I.

According to the marriage contract between the duke and his consort, a document confirmed by the last will and testament of the Duchess Suzanne, the immense possessions of Bourbon centred in the constable as the male heir of the family, — rights further guaranteed and acknowledged under the sign-manual of King Louis XII.; who renounced for himself and his successors all claims to the fiefs of Bourbon given to the crown by the will of Louis II., Duke de Bourbon, in case the Duchess Suzanne deceased without direct heirs. Anticipating, perhaps, some attack on his possessions from the enmity of the Duchess d'Angoulême, the Constable de Bourbon, with somewhat indecent haste, asked the hand of the Princess Renée of France, sister of Queen Claude. This demand was met by a peremptory refusal on the part of the king; who, however, somewhat softened its apparent harshness by writing to the constable that it was in his power to raise himself to the highest dignity in the realm next to the kingly state, by taking advantage of the favourable sentiments entertained for him by the Duchess d'Angoulême.[1] But the constable's dislike of the duchess, and his indignation at the persecution he had endured at her hands, closed his heart to Louisa's advances. Though she was eight years his senior, the duchess had but just attained the age of forty; she was still beautiful; her power was acknowledged throughout the kingdom; and her attachment to the Duke de Bourbon subsisted even while he was poor, obscure, and unknown. Many proofs had Louisa given the constable of her favour; he owed his dignities to her patronage; but in the vehemence of his resentment for her late discountenance, he forgot the many benefits she had conferred. Not content with a contemptuous refusal of Louisa's proposal, Bourbon was mad and unprincipled enough to indulge in sarcasms reflecting on the honour of the duchess, and even impugning the legitimacy of the king. The haughty Louisa writhed under the gross allusions made by the constable to a certain miller at Cognac, to whom he averred that her royal son, in face and figure, bore so striking a resemblance that the likeness could not be accidental.[2] Incensed and outraged beyond measure, the duchess vowed the destruction of the audacious

[1] Gailliard, Hist. de François I.; Mezeray, Abrég. Chron.
[2] Varillas, t. i. p. 215.

slanderer; and aided by Duprat, she made a formal claim to the succession of Suzanne de Bourbon.

Louisa was cousin-german to the Duchess Suzanne, and her nearest surviving relative. Her mother, Marguerite de Bourbon, was sister to the Duke de Bourbon-Beaujeu: and by the decease of Suzanne and the Duke Philibert of Savoy, the Duchess d'Angoulême remained the undoubted representative of the elder branch of her family, and had as much right to inherit its patrimony as Suzanne possessed before her marriage with Charles de Montpensier. The same contest, therefore, was about to be renewed between the heiress and the heir male of the house of Bourbon as had been so amicably arranged in the reign of Louis XII., by the union of the rival claimants of that immense succession, Suzanne de Bourbon and her cousin, Charles, Count de Montpensier. The Duchess d'Angoulême laid claim to the personalty and estates of the Duchess Suzanne; while the king was induced to sanction a demand for the reunion of the great fiefs, appanages, and duchies of the house of Bourbon, under pretence that they had fallen by escheat to the crown.[1] These possessions were the provinces of Auvergne, La Marche, Bourbonnais, le Forez, Beaujolais, and the principality of Dombes. At first the parliament hesitated to commence a process fraught with so dangerous a precedent as that of setting aside the acts of three preceding monarchs. The chancellor, however, persisted in the name of the duchess in demanding the trial of the cause; and displayed such perseverance, ingenuity, and industry, and had recourse to so many discreditable arts of legal chicanery, that, at length, the parliament, accustomed to obey the despotic will of the sovereign, placed a sequestration on the revenues of the constable, and assigned him a pension out of his estates until the cause was decided.

Rendered desperate by the dishonourable and even fraudulent methods adopted to despoil him of his estate, Bourbon, whose irascible spirit panted for revenge, resolved no longer to bear even the outward semblance of submission to a monarch who could tolerate so flagrant an act of injustice. Accordingly, he

[1] Gailliard, Hist. de François I; Mezeray, Abrég. Chron.; Pasq. Rech. de la France. The will of Louis II., Duke de Bourbon, gave his estates to the crown on failure of *direct heirs*. The Chancellor Duprat pretended that this word *direct* excluded the collateral branches of the house of Bourbon.

lent a ready acquiescence to the overtures of the emperor, who wished for nothing so much as an opportunity to foment civil war in the very heart of his rival's dominions; and who gladly and skilfully availed himself of Bourbon's animosity to lure him from his allegiance. A treaty was secretly negotiated between them, in which the emperor promised to bestow upon the constable the hand of his sister, Eleanor, widow of Emmanuel, King of Portugal; to aid him to recover his estates; and, moreover, to confer upon him Provence, with all the territory anciently comprehended within the limits of the kingdom of Arles, with the title of king.[1] Henry VIII. of England was comprehended in this treaty, which was negotiated by Beaurein, son of Adrian de Croy, Count de Rœux. Henry's ambition was flattered by the hope of ascending the throne of France; and, under this condition, he agreed to levy a powerful army, and to make a descent upon Normandy, while the Imperial forces ravaged Provence and the south of France.[2] All things thus prepared for a mighty vengeance, the fame of which should resound throughout Europe, Bourbon fled from France in disguise, before the king, who received private information of the conspiracy when too late to frustrate it, could take measures for his arrest.[3]

When the news of this startling event reached the court, it struck even the inexorable Duchess d'Angoulême with dismay. The misfortunes of France appeared at their height; domestic treason, foreign invasion, religious animosities, and financial difficulties, combined to ruin and precipitate her from her lofty eminence amongst the nations of Christendom. Francis bore his reverses with dignity and fortitude. He postponed for the present his design of reconquering Milan; feeling, that, while subjects who boasted of the noblest blood of France were daily arrested for their criminal participation in the treason of the constable, the King of France might not quit his kingdom for

[1] Mezeray, Abrég. Chron. The emperor engaged to bestow a dowry of 200,000 crowns upon his sister; and, in the event of his own death, and that of the Archduke Ferdinand, without leaving heirs male, he promised to declare Eleanor heiress of the hereditary dominions of her house. The Queen of Portugal also possessed an independent revenue of 20,000 crowns, and jewels to the value of five or six thousand crowns. The constable was to settle the province of Beaujolais on his bride.

[2] Gailliard, Hist. de François I.

[3] Mém. de Du Ballay.

foreign conquest. When informed of the league concluded between Bourbon, the emperor, and the King of England, by which Henry undertook to land an army of 40,000 men on the coast of France, under the command of the Duke of Suffolk, the king exclaimed with undaunted courage: "It is true that the princes of Europe have conspired against me; but I care not, for I have an answer and a defiance for each of them. In the first place, I do not embarrass myself with the emperor's projects, because he has no money to maintain them; nor with those of the King of England, for my province of Picardy is well fortified; the Flemish are bad soldiers; and as for Italy, I will not yield one inch of the territory which my enemies have momentarily wrested from me!"

Such were the distractions amid which the Duchess d'Alençon lived. Marguerite possessed not the same influence over the actions of her haughty mother as she exercised over those of the king. She dreaded Duprat, Louisa's favourite and confidential adviser; and she seems never to have lived on cordial terms with him, as on several occasions the Duchess d'Alençon used her power over the king to reverse his chancellor's arbitrary decisions.

The only letters which have been preserved, written by the Duchess d'Alençon at this early period, besides those addressed to the Bishop of Meaux, are six epistles to the Baron de Montmorency. The rise of his gallant son, Anne de Montmorency, afforded ceaseless interest to the duchess. At the solicitation of his sister, the king bestowed a bâton of marshal of France, at liberty by the decease of the Marshal de Châtillon,[1] on Montmorency. When raised to this eminent dignity, Anne de Montmorency had scarcely attained the age of thirty. He had acquitted himself with great bravery throughout the various campaigns which had hitherto signalized the reign of Francis. Montmorency owed his rise, however, to his favour with the royal family, rather than to any signal military talents he possessed. Valiant and energetic, while acting under the commands of another, Montmorency, even when invested with the supreme

[1] Gaspard de Coligny, Marshal de Châtillon, died at Dax, August 24th, 1522, while on his way with a division of the French army to succour the town of Fontarabia, besieged by the Imperialists. He married Louise, the sister of Anne de Montmorency, who succeeded to his dignities.

command of the armies of France as constable, never fought a thoroughly successful battle. He tried to atone for his want of military science by severity of discipline. Harsh and dictatorial, Montmorency was never known to defer to the advice of his more experienced subordinates; and the consequence was, that his career presents a series of military reverses, strangely at variance with the brilliant favour which he enjoyed at court.

It is surprising that a character, thoroughly unamiable and violent as that of Montmorency, could have so interested Marguerite as to have monopolized almost her entire favour, and evoked those expressions of extravagant praise which fill her correspondence with him. Reared from his earliest youth at court, doubtless Montmorency knew how to adapt his deportment, so as by deferential homage to render himself acceptable to a princess of Marguerite's age and vivacity, whose fondness for her brother, and her unwillingness to give him pain, made her tolerant of even his most equivocal favourites. With the staff of a marshal of France, the king bestowed upon his favourite, despite the financial difficulties of the kingdom, the forfeited possessions of Jean, Sieur de Ste. Aldegonde, and of Philippe de Montmorency, both of whom had traitorously entered the service of the emperor. In the act of donation, the king highly lauds the valour and services of Montmorency, and states that he had several times during the course of the year 1522, put his life in jeopardy by eminent services rendered to the royal cause in Italy.[1]

The court, meanwhile, was sojourning at Blois, with the Duchess d'Angoulême and her daughters. The king was absent on a progress to inspect the resources which his kingdom might present to stem the torrent of invasion. The Duchess d'Angoulême, anxious and agitated, awaited the termination of the process against the constable, which was to augment her wealth, already so vast. Many of the courtiers, confounded at the rapid events of the last few months, and ignorant what calamities might be impending, precipitately retired to their homes, leaving the court comparatively deserted.

From excitement of mind, and other causes, the health of the Duchess d'Angoulême had been much impaired during the whole

[1] MSS. de Gaignières Bibl. du Roi, fol. 69.

of the year (1522). She suffered at intervals from excruciating attacks of gout, and from other maladies connected with that disorder.[1] With ceaseless care, during the whole of this period, Marguerite attended upon her mother; and witnessed the tumultuous sorrow which at times preyed upon the mind of the duchess. Louisa was a woman of violent and unsubdued passions, and with wayward impetuosity she pursued her ends regardless of consequences; but her nature was neither depraved nor recklessly wicked. The gentle admonitions of her daughter, and her own misgivings of conscience about this time, renewed the interest she had once felt in the cause of ecclesiastical reform. The brilliant court had not yet assembled; for the king was still absent on his progress through the kingdom. Marguerite therefore took advantage of her mother's comparative loneliness to awaken again that spirit of inquiry which had once inspired the Bishop of Meaux with sanguine hope. Sedulously and earnestly Marguerite set to work: soon her success surpassed her most glowing anticipations. The restless and distracted spirit of the Duchess d'Angoulême needed repose, or rather respite from self-contemplation. She accordingly authorized Michel d'Arande to remain in Paris, on purpose to translate for her portions of the Holy Scripture. The joy of the Duchess d'Alençon was unbounded; and precisely at the time — an event she accepted as a favourite omen — Marguerite received from Briçonnet the Epistles of St. Paul, translated and splendidly illuminated, with a humble request from the bishop that she would be pleased to offer them to the king and his mother. "This present, madame, from your hands cannot but be most pleasing," said the bishop, "as therein is meat for a king, flattering without corrupting, and healing from all maladies. The more we taste this food, the more insatiable becomes our appetite."[2]

But Marguerite desired of all things the presence of the Bishop of Meaux at Blois. Distrusting her power to fan into a flame the glimmering light which her words had kindled, Marguerite, who wrote so humbly to Briçonnet, to entreat him "to obtain of infinite mercy by his prayers a *reveillez* for the poor sleeper (meaning herself), that she might awake from her

[1] Journal de Louise de Savoie.
[2] MS. Bibl. du Roi, S. F. No. 337.

heavy and mortal slumber, as the hour is at hand,"[1] felt that the learning and eloquent zeal of the Bishop of Meaux would be needful to make a permanent impression on the worldly mind of the Duchess d'Angoulême. She wrote, therefore, to Briçonnet, to induce him to journey to Blois, and present in person his translation of the Epistles to her royal mother.

The Bishop of Meaux was unable to yield to the solicitations of the duchess. A violent insurrection of the monks at Meaux against the reformed teachers broke out, which required all the bishop's authority to quell. Incensed at the doctrines taught there by Lefèvre and his colleagues under the patronage of the bishop, the Franciscan monks, with the abbot at their head, made one day a tumultuous sally from their monastery to the Episcopal palace, and clamorously demanded from Briçonnet the expulsion of the new teachers. Firmly, yet courteously, the bishop dismissed the deputation of factious monks, who had thus insolently obtruded themselves into his presence; but on the following Sabbath he ascended the pulpit in the cathedral, and in an eloquent discourse publicly justified Lefèvre and his companions, and branded the monks as hypocrites, declaring that the pollution of religion and morals flowed alone from their avarice and sloth.[2] Transported with rage, the superiors of the monastery set out for Paris on the following morning, to lay a formal complaint against their bishop before the Sorbonne and the parliament. They first sought an interview with the syndic, Noël Béda, and promised to be guided by his advice. Béda received them with open arms, and applauded their fidelity and zeal; for he longed for nothing more than an opportunity to pursue his persecution of Lefèvre and his followers. The appeal therefore was resolved upon; the Franciscans hastened before the parliament, and denounced their bishop and the heretic teachers of Meaux. Thus commenced the first religious persecution in France. Its theatre was the city of Meaux; the tide of intolerance, once suffered to flow, overwhelmed all things, and plunged France into a series of civil commotions which sapped the foundations of her glorious throne, and ultimately hurled the sceptre from the grasp of the race of Valois.

Very early at the commencement of the year 1523, the Duchess

[1] MS. Bibl. du Roi, S. F. No. 337.

[2] Duplessis, Hist. de Meaux, p. 131, t. 1.

d'Angoulême quitted Blois to join the king at St. Germain-en-Laye, and Marguerite accompanied the Duke d'Alençon to his castle of Argentan in Normandy. The duchess had never made any sojourn at Argentan since the period when she there so summarily took leave of her husband, and returned with the king to Amboise. Perhaps this species of reconciliation with the Duke d'Alençon arose from the influence of religion on the heart and on the practice of the duchess. Her perseverance in that which at first, with her sentiments toward the duke, must have been a painful duty, appears to have met with its reward; for soon after her arrival at Argentan, the duchess wrote in a playful and apparently happy strain, in reply to a letter which she had received from her old friend the Baron de Montmorency informing her of his health, — a subject which, from Marguerite's constant recurrence to the theme, seems to have afforded her infinite solicitude: —

LETTER OF THE DUCHESS D'ALENÇON TO THE BARON DE MONTMORENCY.

ARGENTAN.

MON COUSIN, — I have received your letter, by which you inform me of the state of your health; it has given me infinite pleasure, for I was beginning to be in fear concerning it. You praise your Ecouen[1] to me; nevertheless I shall not cease to wish you were at Argentan, both on account of the great beauty of the place and also that I find the air so delicious that it seems to me you would feel yourself much better here. I do not tell you how prosperously I am getting on with my *ménage*, but will leave you to divine what, while in this place and surrounded by the company assembled here, she can say or do who subscribes herself your good cousin and friend.

This letter was dictated by the duchess to her secretary, Mademoiselle de Foix, and space was here left for Marguerite to sign her name. Instead of doing so, the duchess added the following postscript in her own hand: —

I have shown your letter to the Demoiselle Marguerite de Lorraine, who, despite her grey habit, has a very vivid remembrance of bygone

[1] Ecouen was a castle belonging to the Baron de Montmorency, situated near Paris. It was afterwards magnificently rebuilt by the constable, Anne de Montmorency.

days. I assure you she acquits herself so well in praying for your prosperity that, if all the other ladies whose favour you have possessed did as much, you ought not to regret the past, — for their prayers would speedily transport you to heaven, where, after a long and happy life, she desires to see you who subscribes herself,

Your very good cousin and friend,

MARGUERITE.[1]

The duchess in her postscript referred to some ancient love passage in the lives of the Baron de Montmorency and of the Princess Marguerite of Lorraine, who was the aunt of Claude, first Duke de Guise, and at that time canoness of some religious order, — most probably of that of the Convent of Noble Ladies at Maubeuge. Marguerite at this period was evidently happier and more contented than she had ever been under the roof of the Duke d'Alençon; she even finds courage to praise Argentan, and does not appear to regret her separation from her brother and the court.

There is reason to suppose, from a short postscript attached to one of the letters written by the duchess,[2] that at this period, for the first time, Marguerite had the prospect of becoming a mother; and although her hopes were speedily disappointed, it is probable that the expectation of welcoming an heir to his princely name and fortune warmed the heart of the Duke d'Alençon towards his wife, and consequently shed a brighter halo round Marguerite's sojourn at Argentan.

During her residence in Normandy Marguerite wrote one more letter to her old friend the Baron de Montmorency, to compliment him on his improving health, which had made such progress that he was able to undertake a pilgrimage to the shrine of Notre Dame de Liesse to pray for its perfect restoration. Marguerite begs the baron when there to return to her in double portion the prayers that she has offered to Heaven in his behalf.[3]

Tidings of the severe indisposition of the Duchess d'Angoulême compelled Marguerite, soon after the despatch of this letter, to quit Argentan. It appears that she did so rather hastily, and

[1] F. Béth., No. 8514, fol. 75, Bibl. du Roi.
[2] MS. F. de Béthune, No. 8514, fol. 53.
[3] MS. Bibl. du Roi, F. de Béthune, No. 8514.

before her own health was thoroughly re-established, — at least in the opinion of her indefatigable correspondent De Montmorency; for she wrote to the baron immediately after her arrival at St. Germain-en-Laye to reassure him about her health and that of the queen and the Duchess d'Angoulême (his good mistress).

The Duchess d'Angoulême was still suffering from a prolonged and severe attack of gout, combined with bilious disorders. A few days later Marguerite wrote thus to the Marshal de Montmorency, who was employed at the time on the frontiers of Picardy in the king's service: —

LETTER OF THE DUCHESS D'ALENÇON TO THE MARSHAL DE MONTMORENCY.

MON COUSIN, — To commence by sending you news of Madame, I must inform you that she has been exceedingly ill, and suffering from great debility. You may imagine our tribulation and sorrow! Since yesterday, however, she has gradually improved; but she is yet extremely weak. Madame has expressed great desire to see you here, and she commands me to tell you so.

M. de Villene[1] informed me yesterday that you are suffering from some ailment of the stomach; therefore, mon cousin, do as respects this wish of Madame as your health permits, — which I nevertheless earnestly desire may be strong enough to allow you speedily to join us here. Until God is pleased to grant you this grace of health I shall often wish myself with you to hear the sermons preached by your bishop,[2] of which I feel sure you will lay in a good provision to impart to me at some future time.

Mon cousin, I pray God to give you the happiness and prosperity which she wishes you who is

Your good cousin and friend,

MARGUERITE.

From St. Germain-en-Laye this last day of February.

P. S. — I implore you, above all things to be careful of your health, and to send me word frequently how it progresses, for you know that I esteem it as my own. You will be pleased to make my commendations to M. de Senlis.[3]

The superscription of this letter is to "Mon cousin, M. le Maréchal de Montmorency." It is the first of a series of one

[1] Jean de Brinon, Seigneur de Villaines, chancellor of the duchy of Alençon.
[2] Guillaume Petit, Bishop of Troyes and Senlis, confessor to the king.
[3] F. de Béth., MS. Bibl. du Roi, No. 8514.

hundred and seventy letters addressed by Marguerite to her favourite and protégé, Montmorency. Many of these letters are extremely interesting; while others are filled only with general expressions of good-will towards Montmorency, and with promises of her favour and support. Marguerite evidently wrote with great rapidity: sometimes whole sentences in her letters are rendered almost hopelessly obscure by the omission of the principal word that should serve as the key to explain her meaning and intent. Her admiration for Anne de Montmorency, and her praise of all his doings, borders at times on extravagance, and is far from being confirmed by the calm judgment which posterity has passed on the merits and character of the renowned constable.

The Duchess Louisa continued to make slow progress towards recovery; her illness caused her daughter the greatest anxiety and sorrow. In her distress, Marguerite forgot her own recent illness, and tended her mother with unremitting devotion. Louisa bore her sufferings with patience and fortitude, for she possessed invincible strength of mind. Her self-command, her personal exertions, and astonishing mental powers, when enduring excruciating agonies from the disease which embittered her existence, amounted sometimes to a degree of heroic fortitude that nothing but her strong mother's-love could have elicited. When employed in promoting the welfare of her children, Louisa forgot self; but, admirable as was this maternal devotion, it was equalled and rewarded by the almost idolatrous attachment and respect lavished upon her by Francis I. and Marguerite.

From St. Germain, Marguerite again wrote to the Marshal de Montmorency, to give him news of the health of Madame, who had suffered a slight relapse. The marshal, in the meantime, had been busily employed in putting down the bands of fierce marauders which, upon the partial disbanding of the army on the frontiers, ravaged the country, and therefore had not been able to accept the duchess's invitation, and repair to court.

Montmorency then commanded a division of the army under the Duke de Vendôme; but as soon as he had effectually accomplished the task intrusted to him, of delivering his country from the gangs of brigands infesting it, he was to depart for Italy, to assume the command of the vanguard of the army about to enter the Milanese, under the Admiral de Bonnivet. The Baron

de Montmorency, meantime, returned to court to consult the Duchess d'Alençon on a project he had much at heart, which was his desire to affiance his son, before his departure for Italy, to the eldest daughter of Claude, Count de Guise, and of Antoinette de Bourbon, sister of the Duke de Vendôme. This, eventually, would have proved a splendid alliance for the marshal, and a marriage doubtless eagerly persisted in by him, could he have foreseen the future rise of the House of Guise. Marie de Lorraine, however, when her hand was sought by the Baron de Montmorency for his son, had only just entered her eleventh year; but, notwithstanding the disparity of years between the marshal and his proposed bride, the Count de Guise — whose favour at court was then inferior to that enjoyed by Montmorency — eagerly accepted the proposal. Marguerite, though she entered with alacrity into the project of providing her *protégé* with a spouse, appears not to have given her hearty assent to this scheme. The extreme youth of Mademoiselle de Guise seemed to her a grave objection; besides which, judging from a remark made by the duchess in one of her letters to Montmorency, the marshal knew comparatively little of his intended bride, or of her father. "I have had letters from M. de Joinville," [1] writes Marguerite to the Marshal de Montmorency,[2] "and he is extremely desirous that you should go there about eight days hence, to espouse his daughter. I think that he (M. de Guise) is well-intentioned; but, for contracting so long a bargain, your term of friendship has been short." The marshal himself looked coldly on the project, and manifested little concern for the progress of the negotiation, which evidently was originated by his father and the Count de Guise. In the child proposed to him for his future wife, Montmorency perceived not the dawn of those charms for which Marie de Lorraine was afterwards so renowned, and that captivated the hearts of three potent monarchs;[3] and though she was the niece of the reigning Duke de Lorraine, the marshal's ambition took yet a higher flight, and by the favour of

[1] The barony and castle of Joinville, in Champagne, formed part of the heritage of Claude, afterwards first Duke de Guise.

[2] MS. Bibl. du Roi., F. Béth., No. 9127, fol. 29.

[3] Henry VIII. of England, James V. of Scotland, and the dauphin afterwards Henry II. of France. Henry VIII. vehemently demanded her hand while Marie was wooed by the King of Scotland; and the dauphin was with difficulty prevented from divorcing his wife, Catherine de' Medici, in order to espouse her.

Marguerite, it is supposed at this time he dared even to aspire to the hand of the Princess Renée of France, the sister of the queen.

Perceiving how greatly the Baron de Montmorency desired to achieve this marriage, Marguerite consented to receive Mademoiselle de Guise after her betrothment amongst her maids of honour, until the return of the marshal from Italy. "You will do well," writes the Duchess d'Alençon to M. de la Roche, the brother of Anne de Montmorency,[1] "to advertise M. de Joinville no longer to delay to bring his daughter to me, for we are going to sojourn for a time at the house of M. Deschenais, where she can easily join me." "I am writing by this post to M. de Joinville, to remind him of his promise to confide his daughter to my care, and I assure you, mon cousin, that she shall be welcome; and I will take care to insure for her better treatment at court than even I receive," said Marguerite in a letter to the Baron de Montmorency,[2] wherein she renders him account of her success in procuring for him permission from the Duchess d'Angoulême to remain absent from court some weeks longer.

For some unknown reason, this alliance between Mademoiselle de Guise and the Marshal de Montmorency was never accomplished. A more exalted destiny awaited Marie de Lorraine: she first bestowed her hand upon Louis II., Duke of Orleans-Longueville; after the death of this prince, she became the consort of James V. of Scotland; and, in 1541, the mother of the unfortunate Mary Stuart.

The Duchess d'Angoulême, while Marguerite amused herself with the details of this proposed marriage, was slowly recovering her health, when the alarming illness of the Duke d'Angoulême her youngest grandson, who was about a year and a half old, so overwhelmed Madame with grief as to cause a third recurrence of the most painful symptoms of her malady. Ill as she was, the duchess refused to quit the cradle of the infant prince; and for several days she watched by him with unwearied assiduity, through the various stages of his malady.

"Madame has been so tormented with gout that I have never before seen her suffer so severely, and with such little interval of repose," writes the Duchess d'Alençon to the Marshal de Mont-

[1] MS. Bibl. du Roi, Fonds Béth., No. 8535.
[2] MS. Bibl. Roy, F. de Béth., No. 8550.

morency, during the illness of her little nephew.[1] "She has not been able to read your letter," continues Marguerite, "for until just now, when she began to feel relief, she has been four-and-twenty hours in extremity of pain from her left foot, after having endured for six days agonies in her right." Marguerite's residence at court was, doubtless, at this period, a source of consolation and comfort to her relatives. Her active mind and ready genius, possessed as she was of the confidence of the king and of Madame, often served them well, at a time when public adversity and personal misfortune darkened the hitherto unclouded career of Francis. Marguerite's bright presence alleviated the sickness and gloom of St. Germain: her wit, beauty and liveliness cheered Francis, depressed by the desperate state of public affairs, and harassed by intense anxiety at the precarious health of Madame and of Queen Claude.

The queen, whose health from childhood had been delicate, after the birth of her daughter Marguerite[2] fell into a gradual decline. During the nine years elapsed since her union with Francis, she had borne him seven children; thus her constitution, exhausted beyond her strength, could no longer resist the tendency to pulmonary disease which had early displayed itself. From the period, therefore, of her last *accouchement*, Claude rarely quitted her chamber, where she employed her solitary hours in prayer and in pious exercises. Happy in this employment, and in the society of her children, the queen lived a peaceful and retired life, amidst the tumult of the court. Knowing that her recovery was hopeless, she prepared herself to die, — feeling, probably, little regret, except for the sake of her children, at quitting a world in which her virtues commanded neither esteem nor acknowledgment. Later, indeed, the people rendered homage to the sterling, yet unobtrusive qualities of their good Queen Claude; but the flippant courtiers ridiculed her piety, and found nothing to kindle extravagant enthusiasm in her gentle deportment.

The Marshal de Montmorency, meantime, during the crisis in the illness of Madame and her grandson, departed for Italy. Anxious to hear news of the royal family, the marshal wrote to

[1] MS. Bibl. du Roy, de Béth., No. 9127.

[2] Marguerite was born at St. Germain-en-Laye, June 5, 1523. She was named after her godmother, the Duchess d'Alençon.

the Duchess d'Alençon, reproaching her for her long silence. Marguerite had been so distracted by care and anxiety as not even to have had leisure to think of Montmorency. She soon afterwards despatched to him the following kind and condescending letter, which atoned for her previous apparent neglect: —

LETTER OF THE DUCHESS D'ALENÇON TO THE MARSHAL DE MONTMORENCY.

ST. GERMAIN-EN-LAYE.

It is so long a time since we have had anything but sickness here that I could only have written to you ill news; for M. d'Angoulême has caused so much anxiety to Madame that in saving her child she has nearly destroyed herself; she is now better, but her health is far from restored. Then, not to be disowned by our sick house, I tried to follow the same example; but not having grace to submit humbly to sickness, I felt little, or rather none; for He who only sends us tribulation to work our salvation did not long contend with my impatience, — for the good and virtuous are alone worthy of suffering pain. It is enough for such as I to be permitted to wait upon the sick, without giving trouble to those who are so much better than myself.

My messenger will give you intelligence of how affairs progress here. I assure you that your master is indefatigable in his exertions to send you succour; and if it were possible, to go to you in person would be the fulfilment of his dearest wish. I supplicate the God of battles so to dispose events that for His honour the honour and lives of His servants may be preserved. You will give Madame great pleasure if you often write to her; and more than you think, or believe, to your good cousin, MARGUERITE.[1]

[1] MS. Bibl. Royale, F. de Béth., No. 9127.

CHAPTER VIII.

MARGUERITE, meantime, in the midst of her distress and anxiety, forgot not Briçonnet and her friends at Meaux. The portions of the Bible sent to her by the bishop had been her comfort and consolation when all things else seemed to fail. The Duchess d'Angoulême, on the contrary, from a motive of curiosity alone, opened the sacred volume sent to her with so emphatic an entreaty that she would peruse it carefully. For political motives she wished to learn what the doctrine of the sectarians might be, against whom the factious Sorbonne ceaselessly agitated. Nothing in that holy book besides recommended itself to Louisa's feelings or imagination; and she speedily closed it, as she opened it, perhaps still more exasperated that its precepts and sublime doctrines, now accessible to every one, should present so eloquent a protest against the love of luxury, power, dominion, and revenge, — passions ever dominant in her own proud heart.

Marguerite, however, assailed by so many temptations, by ridicule, by the alluring pomps and dissipation of the court, turned from all, and in lowliness of spirit besought aid to comprehend the mysteries of a faith so pure, simple, yet heart-searching. Often she retired from the brilliant circle which surrounded her, to meditate on these things. The duchess recorded the varied emotions of her soul at this period in various poetical effusions, some of them of great beauty, which were subsequently collected together, by her own direction, and published under the title of "La Marguerite,[1] de la Marguerite des princesses, très illustre Royne de Navarre." In this collection,

[1] In allusion to her own name, Marguerite, which in the French language signifies a daisy.

the "Miroir de l'âme pécheresse"[1] is the principal poem, and also the one which occupied Marguerite's attention at this period. Opposite, indeed, are the pious aspirations by the which the duchess there relieves her heart to the jests and witty profanity of the Heptameron. At times, apparently bowed down with anguish, Marguerite, torn by the contending claims of the world, of her beloved brother, and of that religion which she had so sincerely embraced, expresses herself in strains of deepest grief and humility. In one part of the "Miroir de l'âme pécheresse," Marguerite thus describes her conflict with temptation, and the sorrow that often overpowered her: she says —

"In spirit noble, thralled by nature I;
Essence of Heaven, pollution's progeny;
Temple of God, of guilt receptacle;
Immortal, to corruption ever tending;
Nurtured by God, yet earthward grossly bending;
Evil I fly, yet love transgression well;
Reason I love, and yet 'gainst right rebel.
Long as I breathe on earth the breath of life
Doomed am I evermore to live in strife."

But it is to the Bishop of Meaux, her spiritual guide and director, that Marguerite turns in her eager desire for religious knowledge and consolation. Briçonnet had exacted from the duchess a promise that she would apply to him if she were ever at a loss to interpret any passage in the Scriptures which he had sent to her. Marguerite, therefore, wrote to the bishop during the spring of the year 1523, to remind him of his promise, and to request him to give her some rules and directions for the profitable study of the Bible. In this letter the duchess strives to imitate the Bishop of Meaux in the figurative verbiage then so much in vogue, both with the Roman Catholic clergy and the reformed teachers.

Letter of the Duchess d'Alençon to the Bishop of Meaux.

M. de Meaux, — Not to remind you of that which I believe infinite charity would not permit you to forget, or to hasten that promise the accomplishment of which I doubt not of at the time when Providence alone shall perceive its necessity, do I write; but

[1] Le miroir de l'âme pécheresse, ou le Miroir de très Chrétienne princesse Marguerite de France, royne de Navarre, duchesse d'Alençon et de Berry, auquel elle voit et son néant, et son tout.

lest, neglecting that which I ought to desire as one famishing for bread, may retard the bounty emanating from the liberal Giver of good, distributed to us through you, I have resolved to commence at once, by becoming a suppliant.

You once desired that if, in any passage of the very Holy Scriptures, I doubted, or wished for further counsel, I should write to you. I was presumptuous enough to give you this promise. Excuse me for this, as you would do the blind man who sought, and yet failed, to distinguish colours; for I confess that the least sentence I read there is too weighty for me, and the clearest word seems obscure. Alas! what choice can I make when all things are alike to me; or how can I ask for savoury meats, or sauce, when I have no powers of taste? Therefore I demand nothing from you, because I know not what to ask. But from you, the minister of such good things, — you who know the taste of these reviving and strengthening meats, — I pray you, in all truth and sincerity, in the name of the Great Giver who has intrusted them to you, send me some crumbs, so that through this sweet and ravishing Word of Life, your aged mother,[1] grown old in her first spiritual envelopment, may thereby be renewed, and become so thoroughly shaped, polished, and purified, that she may be worthy to belong to the only needful and Omnipotent One.

MARGUERITE.[2]

This extraordinary production of Marguerite's met with a response from the bishop of prodigious length; yet, soaring amid his figures and metaphors, Briçonnet forgets to lend the help so piteously demanded of him, and gives the duchess no instructions to aid her daily study of the Holy Scriptures. But Marguerite was about to have painful experience of the fallibility of human aids. Briçonnet, whom she so revered — who, amid all the tribulations of the last years had been to her more than a friend, guide, and counsellor — was about to shrink from bearing testimony to the truths his pen inculcated; and he who had exhorted her to reject all things, so that she might win God, was ready to succumb beneath his love for the pomp of the prelacy, and his regard for wealth and grandeur of station.

Noël Béda and the monks of Meaux carried on the prosecution against Briçonnet and his friends, the reformers, with

[1] Marguerite had a singular fancy for talking about herself as an old woman. Many instances occur in her letters. At the period when she wrote this letter to the Bishop of Meaux she had not completed her thirty-first year.

[2] MS. Bibl. du Roi, Supplément Franç. No. 337, fol. 220.

unflagging vindictiveness.[1] They accused the bishop of holding Lutheran doctrines; and vehemently denounced the French edition of the New Testament, the joint labour of Briçonnet and Lefèvre,[2] a book which they disowned, and entitled, "Epitres et Evangiles à l'usage du Diocèse de Meaux." Lefèvre's commentary on the Four Gospels, and especially the preface which he appended to it, addressed "to all Christian readers," exasperated the intolerant syndic Béda. With avidity he extracted from this address, and from other works emanating from Meaux, forty-eight propositions which he declared heretical.[3] The Faculty of Theology confirmed his fiat, and passed an unqualified censure on the works of Lefèvre. "Does he not presume to recommend the reading of the Scriptures to the faithful? Does he not attack the most sacred practices, and deny the most holy mysteries?" exclaimed Béda, when pleading before the parliament for Lefèvre's condemnation and that of his associates. Reform, the theologians of the Sorbonne declared, was creeping like a devastating flame into the most secret recesses of the kingdom, banishing peace from families, and hurling upon France the curse of civil dissension. Another eloquent voice, meantime, arose in Paris to add its warning testimony to the general corruption: for a time Martial Mazurier, president of the College of St. Michel, bore faithful witness to the truths of Christianity. The Sorbonne, exasperated by the representations of its unscrupulous syndic, filled Paris with clamorous outcries. "If we tolerate these heretics," exclaimed Béda, "there is an end to our power, our authority, and our teaching. We shall become the derision of France, and the authority of the Sorbonne will be annihilated." An order was at once procured for the arrest of Mazurier, who was seized and thrown into the Conciergerie. There, threatened with cruel tortures and the stake, Mazurier was persuaded to sign a recantation of the truths he had so ably pleaded.

Whether he was fully convinced of his errors by the plausibility of Béda and his colleagues, or perhaps being rendered desperate by the greatness of his fall, Mazurier, when liberated

[1] Bèze, Hist. Eccl.

[2] This edition of the New Testament — its first translation into the French language — was published at Meaux, October 30, 1523, by Simon de Collines.

[3] Gailliard, Hist. de François I., t. v. p. 410.

from prison, became one of the most savage persecutors of the Reformation; and even gained an unenviable notoriety for zeal, when his acts were compared with those of his chief, the indefatigable syndic.[1]

The parliament at length appointed a day for giving a decision on the cause presented by the Sorbonne. After a careful perusal of the original depositions made by the Franciscans of Meaux, and bestowing earnest attention on the accusations preferred by the Sorbonne through its syndic, the parliament decreed the arrest of all the ex-doctors of the Faculty, refugees within the diocese of Meaux, and summoned the bishop to clear himself of the grave charges preferred by the Franciscans.[2]

Thus solemnly cited to justify himself from the stain of alleged heresy, Briçonnet quitted his diocese, and arrived in Paris. A mournful presentiment seemed to have taken possession of his mind; and, like Erasmus, he shrank from conflict with the furious zealots of the university. Gloomy thoughts assailed him; and before his departure from Meaux, all that intercourse with the Reformers, once so refreshing, as he himself declared, was changed into constraint and reserve. Yet, on the Sabbath before his departure, uncertain of the fate which the enmity of the Sorbonne had prepared for him, Briçonnet mounted the pulpit in the cathedral, and solemnly warned his hearers to avoid all teachers who would wrest from them the Word of God. "Even though I, your bishop, your teacher, and your guide, were to change my language and my doctrine, beware then you of changing, like me,"[3] were the prophetic words uttered by Briçonnet in that last sermon, during which his people of Meaux hung, in confidence and veneration, upon his words, as though inspired.

The fall of the Bishop of Meaux, however, was to be gradual; one by one concessions were extorted from him by fear and persuasion. His love of peace, his timid nature, and his desire to work the reformation of the Church by invisible and gradual agencies, led him to give willing attention to the plausible representations of those who suggested to him that a Christian bishop

[1] D'Aubigné, Histoire de la Réformation, p. 390.

[2] Gailliard, Hist. de François I.; D'Argent. Coll. Judic. t. ii. Amongst the doctors thus proscribed by the parliament were Lefèvre, Farel, Caroli, Jacques Pavannes, and Saulnier.

[3] Hist. Catholique de notre Temps, par Fontaine, Cordelier.

ought not to contend, but to live in love and fellowship with all men. They cited the instructions given by Christ himself to his apostles: "If they persecute you in one city, flee ye to another." So that the dispersion of the Evangelical Church of Meaux, they argued, would be like the sprinkling of good seed throughout France, from which a plentiful harvest must spring.

Distrustful of himself, Briçonnet pondered on these things; dread and uncertainty of purpose agitated his mind, nevertheless his demeanour was sufficiently firm after his arrival in Paris to alarm and moderate the rancour of his enemies, who, aware of the bishop's favour at court, felt that the time was not arrived for carrying matters with a high hand. The Duchess d'Alençon was at St. Germain; all-powerful as she then was, it seemed not probable that she would abandon her friend to the malignancy of Béda and his bigoted partisans. In fact, Marguerite speedily assured the bishop of her aid in his difficulties: he who had so abundantly comforted her in her own tribulations, the duchess resolved to protect, despite the menacing attitude of the Sorbonne.

With the aid of such a friend, Briçonnet soon cleared himself of the charge of heresy; but it was the Count de Montbrun, rather than the Bishop of Meaux, who obtained his acquittal from the parliament. The delinquency of the prelate was reserved for a more favourable season. Yet, though the life, the rank, and the wealth of the bishop were for the moment safe, a conspicuous pledge of his adherence to the Roman Church was exacted for the honour of the parliament, the Sorbonne, and his accusers the Franciscan monks. The Duchess d'Alençon, though she defended Briçonnet, dared not also extend the shield of her protection over Lefèvre and his colleagues; or, at least, if she made the attempt, the king's authority, it was thought, would silence his sister. Accordingly, a peremptory demand was made that the bishop should revoke the license to preach throughout his diocese which he had granted to the sectarians. A painful conflict ensued in Briçonnet's mind. Naturally timid, the menaces of Béda terrified him for the peace of the Church. He therefore yielded, and issued in the spring of 1523 his episcopal mandate, not only interdicting the pulpits to Lefèvre, Farel, and their companions, but expelling them from the diocese of Meaux. Heavy must have been the sorrow of

Lefèvre, Michel d'Arande, and the other Reformers at this first fall of their munificent friend and patron; and sad were their auguries for the future as they silently turned from Meaux.[1]

The consternation of the Duchess d'Alençon was great when she learned the concessions extorted from the Bishop of Meaux by the Sorbonne. Her subsequent acts show how greatly she deplored the dispersion of the reformed church at Meaux; and though Marguerite refrained from exciting the ire of the king against his parliament, she distinctly manifested her own extreme displeasure. Her affection for Briçonnet led her to palliate his weakness; and consequently no cessation of their intimate correspondence ensued; but the duchess caused the immediate return to France of Michel d'Arande, whom she appointed her chaplain and almoner. Her next step was to obtain from the king the appointment of a special commission of inquiry to investigate the grounds of the alleged heresy of Lefèvre.[2] The theologians of the university protested against this insult, and even presumed to add menaces; but the king, prompted by his sister, remained firm in his determination. Summoned from the town of Blois,[3] where, under Marguerite's protection, he had found shelter after his expulsion from Meaux, Lefèvre triumphantly proved his innocence; and the commissioners declared him exonerated from the stain of heresy. He then returned to Blois; for Marguerite, as prudent as she was resolute, after this triumph thought it better not to exasperate the Sorbonne to extremities, in the critical state of her brother's affairs. The exile of Lefèvre from Paris, however, was not prolonged. After the return of the king from his captivity in Spain, the Duchess d'Alençon, then in the zenith of her power, caused him to be appointed to the double posts of preceptor of the young Duke d'Angoulême, the king's favourite son, and that of royal librarian at Blois.[4] Marguerite could not give more significant evidence than this of her sympathy with reform, except by the open profession of its doctrines; which her devotion to her brother ever prevented.

The next victim marked for destruction by the sanguinary

[1] Gailliard, Hist. de François I.; D'Aubigné, Hist. de la Réformation.
[2] Gailliard, Hist. de François I.; D'Aubigné, Hist. de la Réformation.
[3] Dictionnaire Historique de Bayle, Art. Jacques le Fève.
[4] Scévole de Sainte Marthe, Éloge de la Reine de Navarre.

Béda, was Louis Berquin, a gentleman of Artois, and an officer of the king's body-guard. Berquin had first drawn upon himself the scrutiny of the syndic by certain epigrams launched at the expense of the Sorbonne. Learned and contemplative, Berquin, the friend of Erasmus, had acquired a great reputation at the court of Francis I. One of the most enlightened of the nobles, his influence with his royal master was great; and sheltered by this powerful patronage, he studied diligently the works of the Reformers, and soon became one of the most zealous of their converts. Little addicted to pleasure, Berquin passed his leisure hours in translating the works of Erasmus, Luther, and Melancthon into French, and in composing treatises on the leading doctrines of the Christian faith, which he amused himself by privately printing. Of no more overt act of offence to the established forms was Berquin guilty, save the silent testimony that the decorum and gravity of his conduct afforded to the purity of his faith. In so retiring and unobtrusive an individual, it was difficult to find a salient charge on which to found an indictment of heresy. Béda was not discouraged; he caused rigorous watch to be kept over every word uttered by Berquin, and at length his perseverance was rewarded by the discovery that his intended victim asserted it was heretical to invoke the Virgin Mary instead of the Holy Spirit before the sermon in the Mass, or to call her "*our hope*," and "*our life*," which titles, Berquin averred, alone belonged to God.[1]

Upon these grounds, Béda applied on behalf of the Sorbonne, and obtained authority from the parliament to search the dwelling of Berquin, and to make a forcible seizure of his books and papers. The syndic, thereupon, at the head of a band of officials and sergeants-at-arms, suddenly surrounded Berquin's house. Entering, he first told the accused his errand, and committing him to the custody of the sergeants, proceeded to the examination of his books. At a sign from the syndic, the books were seized and borne away in triumph, to lay before the faculty of theology. Translations of works, in the handwriting of Berquin, having an heretical tendency, were likewise taken and added to Béda's booty.[2] On the 13th of May, 1523, the Sorbonne con-

[1] Gailliard, Hist. de François I., t. v.; Bayle, Dictionnaire Hist., Art. Berquin, Note C.

[2] Ibid. p. 420.

demned, *en masse*, the books and papers belonging to Berquin, with the exception of two, to be burned as heretical, — a sentence confirmed by the parliament. It was, moreover, ordained that he should be exhorted to abjure his errors. Summoned before the court for this purpose, Berquin replied by a decisive refusal: he was thereupon thrown into the prison of the Conciergerie, preparatory to his formal trial for heresy and certain condemnation to the stake.[1]

The friends of Louis de Berquin, however, were actively exerting themselves in his behalf. Marguerite, they knew, was more potent than the formidable syndic, and could she be induced to interest herself in Berquin's favour, the sanguinary designs of the Faculty would be frustrated. Great hopes were built on this intervention of the king's sister, as Marguerite ever professed admiration of Berquin's talents, and had distinguished him by numerous marks of regard.

The Duchess d'Alençon, thus adjured, hesitated not: resolute and magnanimous, she happily possessed the power as well as the courage to protect those who shared her own opinions. She therefore united her intercession to those of Berquin's friends, and represented to the king the insolence of the Sorbonne in daring to arrest one of his officers upon so frivolous a pretence, without having first ascertained his royal pleasure. Francis needed but this suggestion to break forth into violent transports of passion; he drove from his presence those who essayed to palliate this bold deed of the Faculty; he menaced the parliament; and finally despatched an officer of his guard, accompanied by a sergeant-at-arms, to the Conciergerie, the diocesan prison, with an order for the instant liberation of Louis de Berquin. "If you meet with any resistance I authorize you to break open the prison gates," were the words addressed by the king to his messenger, when, with his own hand, he delivered to him the mandate.[2] Even the audacious Béda was awed by so peremptory a command. The Sorbonne assembled in tumult; but their murmurs this time penetrated not beyond the walls of the university. Louis de Berquin was liberated from custody; and the king transferred the decision of his cause from the Faculty to the Grand Council of State. After going through a few of the

[1] Bayle, Dictionnaire Hist., Art. Berquin.
[2] Gailliard, Hist. de François I.

preliminary forms on such occasions, the Council dismissed Berquin with a slight reprimand, when he was reinstated by the king in his offices at court.[1]

Meantime, while the first fires of persecution were lighting in France, the country was exposed to the horrors of foreign invasion. The Spanish forces entered Navarre, obtained possession of the strong fort of Fontarabia through the cowardice of its governor, Franget, and marching forward to the confines of France, laid siege to Bayonne, which town, however, made a successful resistance, and bravely repulsed the Imperial troops.[2] The English forces, meanwhile, under the Duke of Norfolk, ravaged Picardy; and victorious over the opposing army of the Duke de la Trimouille, advanced, flushed by conquest and pillage, to within eleven leagues of Paris. The court had quitted St. Germain for Blois, whither by slow stages the dying queen was conveyed. The king immediately commanded the Duke de Vendôme to withdraw his troops from Champagne, and march at the head of that division of the army to the relief of Paris. The utmost agitation prevailed in the capital; the terrified citizens flew to arms, and for a brief period all interest in the contentions of Béda was absorbed in the mightier anxiety which each individual felt for his own personal safety.

The winter, however, was far advanced, the roads were becoming impassable, and provisions scarce, so that the invading army, daunted by the determined spirit of resistance which it encountered, and afraid that its retreat back to Calais might be cut off between two hostile armies, withdrew into the province of Artois; while the Duke of Norfolk, quitting the forces under his command, repaired to London to excuse himself, as well as he might, to his royal master for the total failure of the campaign.

About the middle of September, 1523, Bonnivet, who by the advice of Madame had been invested with the command of the army for the re-conquest of the Milanese, marched into Italy, and despite the formidable league entered into by the pope and the various states for the preservation of Italian independence, subdued in an incredibly short period the duchy, as far as the river Ticino, and sat down before Milan. The place was well supplied with provision, and held out gallantly against the attack

[1] Gailliard, Hist. de François I., t. v.
[2] Mém. de Martin du Bellay.

of the French. Bonnivet, harassed by Prospero Colonna, general of the League, and growing impatient at length of a warfare which promised to be interminable, raised the siege on the approach of winter, and retired to Biagrasso, to refresh his troops, and to await there a strong reinforcement, that Francis had engaged to send. He remained at Biagrasso for about two months; when the capture of the neighbouring town of Vercelli, by the Constable de Bourbon, cutting off the supplies of provisions from the French army, compelled Bonnivet to retreat upon Turin. Hotly pursued by the constable, Bonnivet's march assumed the aspect of a disorderly flight. Wounded severely in the arm, the admiral confided the conduct of the retreat to Bayard and Vandenesse, brother of the Marshal de la Palice, and being totally disabled, he caused himself to be transported to the van of the army, for fear of falling into the power of his mortal enemy, Bourbon. Both the Chevalier Bayard and M. de Vandenesse vindicated the honourable confidence reposed in their valour and abilities. Bayard was shot through the back, while keeping the enemy in check, at the head of the men-at-arms; while Vandenesse was killed nearly at the same moment by a ball from an arquebuse.[1] On the flight of the French, every place in the Milanese returned to its obedience to the emperor; and Sforza reassumed the government of the duchy.

In the midst of these troubles Pope Adrian died, September 14, 1523. Giulio de' Medici, cousin of Leo X. succeeded Adrian, and assumed the name of Clement VII. He was elected by the almost unanimous suffrage of the cardinals. The people received with joy the news of his elevation to the pontifical throne; for the reign of a Medici, and the revival of the ancient magnificence of the pontificate, seemed events inseparably connected. The new pope appeared at first inclined to favour the cause of France; or rather he declared his intention of maintaining a strict neutrality in the pending contest between the monarchs, until a significant hint from Charles that he should consider those to be his enemies who did not openly declare themselves his friends, compelled Clement, in order to secure the integrity of the Papal States, to espouse the cause of the League.

Rumours of an invasion of France, meantime, on a scale

[1] Mém. de Du Bellay; Mém. du Chevalier Bayard.

which threatened annihilation to the monarchy, created consternation throughout the kingdom, and shed deeper depression over the royal circle. The constable, at the head of his victorious hosts, intended, it was said, to make a descent upon his native country, carrying fire and sword through districts which once amid tumults of acclamation, had echoed to the proud name of Bourbon. It was in the hour of adversity that the truly great and heroic qualities of the King of France displayed themselves. No longer the dissipated, luxurious prince, Francis, when he girt his sword, resolutely bade farewell to the effeminate pleasures of the court, and assumed, with his armour, the patience, self-denial, and forethought of the efficient soldier. Inspirited by his sister Marguerite, and undaunted by the magnitude of the peril that menaced the kingdom, Francis prepared for the pending conflict. From all quarters of France men-at-arms assembled, — the rendezvous appointed by the king being his faithful city of Lyons.

Amidst this tumult of preparation, the queen was gradually sinking into her grave. Tended with devoted affection by her sister, the Princess Renée, Queen Claude resigned herself submissively to the will of Providence. Early in the month of June, 1524, the king, with his children, Madame, and the Duchess d'Alençon, had assembled at Blois, to take a solemn farewell of the queen, who was believed to be at the last extremity, when a favourable and unexpected change occurred in Claude's malady, and her physicians gave hope that she might continue to exist some months longer. The urgency of the king's affairs permitted him not to remain by the couch of his suffering consort; the army at Lyons demanded his presence; the cities of the South needed inspection, subsidies were to be raised, and the presence of Francis was requisite everywhere to inspire courage and resolution into the hearts of his people. It was a grievous trial to the queen to take leave of her husband. She seems to have had a presentiment that they were to meet no more in this world, although the improvement in her health was apparent enough to justify the hopes of her physicians. About the commencement of July, therefore, the king quitted Blois, and, accompanied by the Duchess d'Angoulême and his sister Marguerite, set out for Lyons. From the moment of their departure, the queen seems to have drooped; the worst symptoms of her disorder, which so

often excites fallacious hopes, returned, and in the space of a few days she grew so ill that an express was despatched to summon Francis back to Blois. The messenger found the king, with his mother and sister, sojourning at Bourges. The critical state of affairs prevented Francis from obeying this summons. The Duchess d'Angoulême and Marguerite, however, set out. They travelled with all speed, hoping to reach Blois in time to see the queen before her decease; but the excitement of the hurried journey so overpowered the strength of the Duchess d'Angoulême that she was again seized with some of the worst symptoms of her old malady, from which she had never fully recovered. As her indisposition continued, Louisa was compelled to stay at Herbault, — a small country-house belonging to the king, situated a few miles from the castle of Blois.[1]

On the morning following the arrival of Madame at Herbault, a missive arrived from the Princess Renée, announcing the peaceful death of the queen, who expired on Wednesday, July 26, at the early age of twenty-four.[2] Claude's children were with her at Blois at the time of her decease, and she breathed her last in her sister's arms. The Duchess d'Angoulême, who scrupulously fulfilled her maternal duties, appears to have felt much compunction for having suffered herself to be prevailed upon to leave the bedside of her expiring daughter. Immediately after receiving the intelligence of the queen's death Louisa despatched the Duchess d'Alençon to Blois, to comfort the Princess Renée and Claude's children by her presence, and to give commands for suitable preparations to be made for the interment of the queen at St. Denis. Claude's obsequies were solemnized with great splendour, though few of the princes of the blood royal were present; nor did the king return to his capital to sanction the magnificence in which his gentle consort was consigned to the tomb. The Duchess d'Alençon then returned to Herbault. She found her mother still sojourning there, in slightly improved health, but yet unable to bear the fatigue of a removal, even to the neighbouring castle of Blois. At the latter end of the month of August Marguerite wrote an

[1] Lettres de Marguerite, Reine de Navarre, MS. Bibl. du Roi, Suppl. fr. No. 337.

[2] Beaucaire in his Commentaries, when he records the death of Queen Claude, calls her "Sanctissima fœmina."

interesting letter to the Bishop of Meaux, from which many of these details have been extracted. Merely a fragment of this letter remains; and its statement of the king's grief is the only direct and authentic record preserved of the feelings of Francis on the loss of his estimable queen. Marguerite wrote as follows: —

HERBAULT, August, 1524.

. . . Therefore, in this hour of tribulation, the contrary ought to be felt, considering that all mortal pains and labours are ended, and eternal repose secured to the soul of her whom God had given us for our queen; of whom it may be truly said that none before her ever bestowed on the nation such fair and precious gifts: these are that exalted renown for virtue, grace, and goodness, with which she was so richly endowed, a face and person that none could wish more comely, and the boon which she has conferred on France of three sons and three daughters.[1] To make a suitable ending to so virtuous a life, she (the queen) has committed to the care of her only and much-loved husband, the execution of her last will and testament, in which she has nominated him her sole executor, and bequeathed to him her duchy of Bretagne, which is to revert at his decease to her eldest son; thus wisely perpetuating union and concord throughout the kingdom. She received the sacrament of confession, and retained her understanding and speech until the last, when she departed, as I believe, in joyous hope, leaving to her friends and relatives such deep affliction for her loss that I have great fears lest the health of Madame may suffer greatly; for journeying rapidly back again to see and minister to her (the queen) from whom she had separated so unwillingly, on the assurance the physicians gave that she would live above three months, and resting in this place of Herbault to recruit from the fatigues of the journey and her incredible distress, which brought back again all the worst symptoms of her late malady, the fatal news reached her; it increased her illness so greatly that if its violence had not speedily abated she could not have endured it long. I trust, with perfect repose both of body and mind, that God will restore her again.

The king, on the other hand, feels not less, whom we left at Bourges awaiting the end. Perceiving that it (the decease of the queen) could not be long averted, he mourned exceedingly, saying to Madame: "If my life could be given in exchange for hers, willingly would I yield it up. Never could I have believed that the bonds of marriage confirmed

[1] Louisa, the king's eldest daughter, died in 1517; the Duchess d'Alençon only mentions the three surviving princesses.

by God were so hard and difficult to sever!" And so in tears we separated. Since, we have not had news how he (the king) fares; but I fear that he is burdened with heavy sorrow. *Je vous departs de mon gâteau.*[1] Vostre inutile mère,

MARGUERITE.[2]

The response of the Bishop of Meaux is, as usual, obscure in its metaphors and tropes. He takes "the cake of tribulation" as the theme of his lucubrations, and goes through the whole process, in parable, of its confection. He says "that it was compounded of tares, ground in the mill of vexation and weariness of spirit, kneaded with cold water in the trough of faithless and disobedient presumption, baked in the oven of self-love, the eating of which has been a snare, poisoning the makers thereof and their posterity." The only allusion to the deceased queen which the bishop makes in his tedious letter is comprehended in these few lines: "And as it is thus, happy is our good lady and queen who has been so prolific, not only as regards this kingdom in terrestrial fruit, but in spiritual likewise, by her exemplary deportment, and paragon of a life which in excellence of perfection has never been surpassed by princess in the memory of man."

A few days after she had despatched her letter to the Bishop of Meaux Marguerite was recalled to Blois by the alarming illness of her eldest niece, the little Madame Charlotte. After the decease of the queen the Duchess d'Alençon looked upon her brother's children as her own. The Dauphin Francis had just completed his sixth year, and the Princess Charlotte her eighth, when death deprived them of their mother.[3] The children of Francis were distinguished for great personal beauty; the Princess Madeleine inherited her mother's exquisite transparency of complexion, with that fatal disease which consigned the queen to a premature grave. The little Duke d'Angoulême, we learn from various portions of Marguerite's correspondence, gave the

[1] A figurative expression, by which the duchess means to imply that she shared her sorrows with the Bishop of Meaux.

[2] MS. Bibl. du Roi, Suppl. fr. No. 337, fol. 359.

[3] Prince Henry was five years old, and his brother Charles, Duke d'Angoulême, two years old. The Princess Madeleine, the most beautiful of the children of Francis I., had just entered her fourth year; and her baby sister, Marguerite, had scarcely completed her twelfth month.

earliest tokens of ability and quickness of intellect. He was the favourite child of the king, and consequently Marguerite's best loved nephew; and throughout her correspondence, she alludes with fond partiality and pride to the progress M. d'Angoulême was making in his studies. The care of the royal children at this period was confided to Madame de Montréal, a lady whom the Duchess d'Alençon highly lauds, declaring that she knew few persons to equal her in learning and virtue.[1] Their usual place of abode was the castle of Amboise, as it was found impossible for the children to accompany their royal parents in the frequent perambulations of the court. For the support of the establishment of the young princes at Amboise, the king assigned an annual revenue of 25,000 livres Tournois; but the expenses of the war, and the failing exchequer, compelled Francis to reduce this allowance, before his departure from St. Germain-en-Laye, to 24,000 livres.[2]

The illness of the Princess Charlotte proved to be measles. Sickly and delicate from childhood, the princess soon grew so ill that her life was despaired of. She had early displayed a tendency to pulmonary complaints; and she possessed none of the vivacity which distinguished her brothers and sisters. On receiving news of her niece's danger, Marguerite hastened back to Blois; but the health of the Duchess d'Angoulême remained still in so critical a condition that it was thought advisable to conceal the princess's illness from her. With affectionate care Marguerite nursed the invalid, whose health at length seemed gradually to mend; the disorder was subdued, but the weakness of the young princess remained so great that she could not be moved from her bed.

During this period of anxiety the affairs of the king added to Marguerite's many solicitudes. The Duchess d'Angoulême was still confined to her room at Herbault, when her presence was urgently required in Paris and at Lyons. Upon Marguerite, therefore, devolved the responsibility of executing the missives which her mother daily received from the king. During the whole of this time, moreover, Marguerite was herself in active correspondence with her brother and with Montmorency. From

[1] MS. Bibl. du Roi, F. de Béth., No. 8550.

[2] Lettre de François I. à M. de Bonchage. MSS. de Béth., No. 8490, Bib. Royale, quoted by Capefigue, Hist. de François I., et la Renaissance.

the date of one of her letters to the latter, it appears that Marguerite made a hasty journey to Charenton during a favourable interval in the malady of the Princess Charlotte. She writes in answer to Montmorency, who seems to have urged the immediate departure of the Duchess d'Angoulême for Lyons, to assure him that her mother's health was yet too precarious to permit her to undertake so long a journey. She adds that the duchess was still inconsolable for the death of the queen. This letter to Montmorency, Marguerite dictated to her secretary ; she appends to it, however, this postscript in her own handwriting relative to the illness of her niece : " Madame Charlotte is improving fast, but she has been in the utmost danger. Madame as yet knows nothing of it." [1]

Marguerite, in her anxiety for the king, who was overwhelmed with cares, had also concealed from him his daughter's illness. Energetic and indefatigable, the duchess feared not responsibility when her exertions might benefit those she loved best on earth. Possessed of the confidence of Francis, the duchess proceeded fearlessly to act for him at this period. Nothing, she knew, would her brother blame or disavow. Her credit with the king was so universally acknowledged that obedience unquestioned and minute followed a command given by the Duchess d'Alençon : to dispute his sister's will, it was felt, would be visited by the king's severest displeasure. Marguerite therefore met with no impediment to arrest her measures. She was still actively engaged at Charenton with her brother's affairs when news reached her of the relapse of her little niece, whom she had left nearly convalescent. Marguerite, therefore, immediately returned to Blois. The disorder with which the princess had been so recently assailed seems, combined with other maladies, to have settled on her lungs ; and on Marguerite's return she found her so altered as at once to dispel the hope she had formed of her recovery.

The princess continued gradually to decline until death released her from her sufferings at the expiration of a month.[2] Marguerite had then the sorrowful task to perform of breaking to her brother the decease of his child. Francis was then in the South, busily engaged making military preparations for a cam-

[1] MS. Bibl. du Roi, F. de Béth., No. 8549.

[2] The Princess Charlotte of France died September 18, 1524.

paign into Italy, after the successful expulsion of Bourbon and his invading hosts from the shores of Provence. The king had dreamed three times that his little daughter appeared by his bedside, and took a solemn farewell of him in the following touching words: "Adieu, mon roy, je vais en paradis." This circumstance made so deep an impression on the mind of Francis that before receiving his sister's despatch, he felt a presentiment that his child was either dead or dying. The Duchess d'Alençon relates this incident, and the grief of Madame, in a letter to Briçonnet, which she wrote soon after the decease of Madame Charlotte. Its tenor is as follows: —

LETTER OF THE DUCHESS D'ALENCON TO THE BISHOP OF MEAUX.

The All-powerful One has revealed himself, — He who can vanquish the roaring flame, and still the violence of the waves, and who has filled my heart and spirit with content and thanksgiving, even (to tell you the truth) to the cure and strengthening of my body, worn with fatigue and watching during the space of nearly one month, during which our poor little child lay ill of fever and dysentery, as you are well aware. Then, after her decease, I had the grief of the king to bear, from whom I concealed her illness. He dreamed, however, three times, that she appeared and said to him, "Adieu, mon roy, je voys en Paradis," and so divined her death, which he took extremely to heart, but (by the goodness of God) patiently. He writes to me that he would rather die than desire her return into this world, rebelling thus against the will of his God, whom, in the midst of his affliction, he blessed. Madame, who had not heard a word, learned the grievous news by the indiscretion of a captain of adventurers, which so exceedingly afflicted her that from dinner-time to her supper hour her tears flowed incessantly. Her lamentations, however, were not mingled with emotions of anger or of impatience; for she never ceased to exhort me to submission; thus fulfilling towards me the office of comforter which I owed to her. I wished for you here to witness this sight; for, seeing her suffer such intense and bodily pain, while her eyes were raised to heaven, praising God for his mercies, I beheld, as I thought, a soul rapt in ecstacy of spiritual transport. Thus has she (Madame) continued, receiving Dame Tribulation (la Dame Tribulacion), not as her guest of a day, but as a sister reared with her, and whom she ever desires for her companion. The resignation which God inspired her with has hitherto preserved her health from evil consequences. I commend her to your prayers; praying you not to forget her, also, who

would not have been happy and at ease unless she had thus written to you her thoughts, and who desires, as the best wish she can form in this world, to remain, Vostre bonne mère,

MARGUERITE.[1]

There are some beautiful and poetical ideas in Briçonnet's reply to the Duchess d'Alençon, though it is to be noted that the bishop makes no remarks on Marguerite's exaggerated picture of the despairing grief of Madame. Louisa's worldly spirit had been sufficiently demonstrated by her vacillating compromise with conscience, when he had so forcibly placed truth before her eyes. "Blessed is that death which gives us peace," says the Bishop of Meaux, in his letter to Marguerite, "and brings repose after the labour and torment of the world! Very blessed is he who has taken his leave of the world; therefore Madame Charlotte is not to be pitied; for, led by innocence as her guide, she has entered the chamber of the Divine Bridegroom who commands you, madame, not to disturb her by your tears and lamentations." "Madame Charlotte can alone be mourned by those who have not the fear of God before their eyes, or who do not desire her best welfare, blinded by self-love and their attachment to things terrestrial," observes the bishop, towards the conclusion of his long letter, which is written in a strain of much greater coherency than the majority of his epistles.

Whilst sickness and death were committing havoc in the domestic circle of the King of France, the invasion of Provence by the Constable de Bourbon and the Marquis de Pescara spread desolation and dismay throughout the southern provinces of the kingdom. It had been Bourbon's bold design[2] to march with the Imperial troops under his command into the very heart of the kingdom, and passing through his hereditary but forfeited duchies of Bourbon, Beaujolais, and La Forez, to raise the standard of rebellion in each; then, pushing onwards towards Paris to form a junction with the English army under the Duke of Norfolk. The jealousies of the emperor's generals, however, fettered and circumvented these designs: they regarded the constable as an interloper, and one whose achievements for the Imperial cause deteriorated from their own glory and renown.

[1] MS. Bibl. Royale, Suppl. fr., No. 337, fol. 409.

[2] Mezeray, Abrég. Chron.; Mém. de Du Bellay.

From the time, therefore, that, as a fugitive and traitor, Bourbon crossed the French frontier, he became the victim of secret cabals. His haughty spirit writhed beneath the covert sneers of the loyal and chivalrous Spanish nobles who despised his treason; while his pride was humbled at the indignity of receiving an annual stipend from the bounty of Charles, — he who once counted revenues kindling the envy even of the magnificent Francis I. The emperor, likewise, disappointed in the effect produced throughout France by the constable's evasion, cooled considerably in his friendly professions. Not one noble of the lineage of Bourbon had joined his banner to the standard of his rebellious chief. The general feeling throughout the country had been one of wonder, regret, and indignant dismay, that a prince so nearly allied to the crown should traitorously attempt to hurl the sceptre from the hand of his sovereign, through the intervention of a foreign foe, and the downfall of his country's honour.

Aware that the constable was highly discontented at the non-fulfilment of his promised marriage with the queen-dowager of Portugal, which Charles skilfully contrived to retard, and that he was altogether dissatisfied at his reception, the emperor, fearing to invest him with the unlimited command of the army for the invasion of Provence, nominated his faithful and tried general, the Marquis of Pescara,[1] as second in command. This implied distrust of his fealty was deeply resented by Bourbon. His displeasure was still further increased by the absolute direction of the emperor that the city of Marseilles should be first invested, in order to secure a free passage into France for his troops from Spain, in case success crowned the efforts of his generals. The emperor, by this command, designed to render the breach between Bourbon and his sovereign still more irretrievable. Remorse, he thought, probably would assail the constable for the calamities he was inflicting on France. The sight of his hereditary domains might kindle again the ancient loyalty of the Bourbons; and the constable, at the head of a victorious army in the centre of the kingdom, could easily dictate terms, and be received again into the apparent favour of his royal master; whilst the emperor

[1] Francis Ferdinand d'Avalos, Marquis of Pescara, and Del Guasto, high chamberlain of Naples, generalissimo of the Imperial forces, died while besieging the fort of Milan in 1525. He was the husband of the renowned Victoria Colonna, so deservedly celebrated for her beauty, virtue, and learning.

would remain duped, and without redress. These considerations induced the politic Charles to risk the displeasure of Bourbon; and positive orders were transmitted from the Imperial council for the blockade of Marseilles.[1]

Bourbon and Pescara therefore entered Provence at the head of an army of thirteen thousand infantry and three thousand horse, and laid siege to Marseilles. The place was valiantly defended, and the citizens fought with such resolute courage that the Imperialists were several times repulsed with great slaughter. The fleet of the emperor, commanded by Hugo de Monçada, also met with a severe defeat before Marseilles from the French squadron under Admiral La Fayette, and the renowned Andrea Doria. The king despatched the Marshal de la Palice with the van of the army to the relief of his brave Marseillais, who, with loyal devotion, performed prodigies of valour. Even the ladies of Marseilles worked in the trenches; and their heroic deportment contributed much towards the preservation of the city.[2]

The Marshal de la Palice[3] fortified the town of Avignon, and established his quarters there, until after the king with the main body of the army came up; he then advanced and made himself master of Salon de Craux, a town about eight leagues from Marseilles. Bourbon, meantime, foiled in his designs by the jealousy of the Marquis de Pescara, and hampered by the careless indifference of the emperor and the King of England, who both neglected to send the necessary succours of men and money, was soon reduced to the greatest straits. The king, at the head of a powerful and well-disciplined army, was on his march from Avignon for the relief of the city; and so near were his forces that the *feu de joie* fired from the ramparts of Marseilles was returned by salutes of artillery from the royal camp. A council of war was hastily summoned by the constable. In the midst of the deliberations the Marquis de Pescara rudely entered the tent, and addressing himself exclusively to Bourbon's officers, exclaimed, "Messieurs, those amongst you who are in haste to go to heaven cannot do better than remain at this siege; but for my part I intend to return to Italy. Believe me,

[1] Mém. de Martin du Bellay.

[2] Gailliard, Hist. de François I.

[3] Jacques de Chabannes, Marshal de la Palice, brother of M. de Vandenesse, who was killed in the retreat of Romagnana.

messieurs, let us all return; we have left Italy without the defence of a single soldier; we may be intercepted on the way!"[1] The council broke up in tumult; the advice of their own tried general was heeded more than the representations of the traitor Constable de Bourbon. The retreat was therefore resolved upon under the conduct of Pescara; it was accomplished with precision and order; but the rear of the Imperial army was harassed by the Marshals de la Palice and de Montmorency, who captured much of the enemy's baggage and pursued them beyond Toulon.[2]

Not a foreign enemy now cumbered the soil of France; and Francis with exulting pride established his headquarters in the city of Avignon, previous to his contemplated descent on the Milanese. During these events the Duchess d'Angoulême and Marguerite arrived at Lyons. The health of Madame was recruited; though she still continued to suffer severely at intervals. The joyous news of the flight of her enemy Bourbon, before the arms of her gallant son, inspired the duchess with no exultation; for with this intelligence came the announcement of the king's intention to push his conquests beyond the Alps. This resolution inspired Madame with the keenest uneasiness. Vainly she employed her maternal influence to induce the king to relinquish his intention of making the campaign in person. Marguerite joined her entreaties to her mother's solicitations. Courier after courier Madame despatched to Avignon to conjure her son not to abandon his kingdom, while menaced with an English invasion; and in vain she represented the league still subsisting between Henry VIII. and the emperor. Francis replied, by representing the destitute condition of the Milanese, drained of troops, and half depopulated by the ravages of pestilence; and the difficulty that the emperor found in raising subsidies, which had been lately refused him by the Cortès of Spain, and the Confederate States of Germany. Still unconvinced, Louisa resolved upon making a journey to Avignon, not

[1] Gailliard, Hist. de François I. t. ii.

[2] The artillery of the town of Marseilles did much damage to the besieging army. Pescara was hearing mass in his tent one day, when a shot entered and killed the officiating priest, and two gentlemen standing by. Bourbon hurried to the tent, to inquire the cause of the confusion. "Oh, nothing," replied Pescara, with sarcastic bitterness; "'t is only the timid burghers of Marseilles, who are coming as you boasted, with ropes round their necks, to present you with the keys of their city."

doubting but that her personal influence would induce the king to relinquish his design. But already was the army on its march; and fearing that before her arrival the king would have passed the frontiers into Italy, the duchess despatched a messenger to announce her speedy approach. So great was Madame's alarm that she even descended to subterfuge to arrest her son's progress, by causing him to be informed that she had state secrets of a most important nature to reveal before his departure, and that she conjured him not to cross the Alps until after she had spoken with him.[1] The king, however, was resolved to make the campaign in person; but aware that it would be difficult to resist his mother's entreaties, he hastily joined his army, and despatched the messenger back to Lyons, bearing a confirmation of the regency to the duchess, — an act which during the preceding year he had caused to pass the Great Seal, as a measure of precaution in case the invasion of the kingdom occasioned his absence from Paris. The courier met Madame on her road to Avignon. Sorrowfully Louisa returned to Lyons, mourning her son's precipitate and ill-advised decision, even as if she could have foreseen its disastrous result.[2]

The letters of regency gave vast powers to the Duchess d'Angoulême. Ample as were the prerogatives conferred upon her during the king's campaign in Italy in 1515, they were surpassed by the powers now committed to her. The parliament, when the edict was submitted for its approval, had presumed again to remonstrate, but was silenced by the king's invariable reply, that "to distrust his mother, was to insult himself." The admirable manner in which Louisa acquitted herself of the high trust confided to her by her son, history unanimously records. Her genius, energy, and devotedness saved France from total ruin. When all seemed lost, — when the sceptre of France was broken, its monarch a prisoner, and its finances ruined, — it was the vigorous and wise administration of the Duchess d'Angoulême that restored confidence throughout the country; it was her genius which directed the policy of the formidable league threatening destruction to Charles's colossal empire, when he seemed to be at the very summit of prosperity. Louisa was one

[1] Gailliard, Hist. de François I.

[2] The letters patent of this regency are dated Gyen sur Loire, August 12, 1523, and addressed to Madame, mère du Roy.

Louise de Savoye
Duchesse D'Angoulême
with her son Francis 1st when in the
6th Year of his age

of those remarkable women who, in French history, seem raised to power to meet some extraordinary emergency. It is worthy of remark that, although the Salique law rigidly bars the throne to women, yet in many instances female courage and resource have alone saved the crown and monarchy in seasons of imminent peril. Blanche of Castile, Anne de Beaujeu, Louisa of Savoy, and Catherine de' Medici, all exhibited, during their respective regencies, brilliant examples of regnal talents; and affairs could scarcely have been in a more complex and critical condition than when each of these princesses assumed the reins of government.

With irresistible ardour the French pursued the retreating army of the emperor. Bourbon and Pescara formed a junction at Aost with De Lannoy, Viceroy of Naples, and their united troops took refuge in Milan. Scarcely had the Imperial army entered by one gate of the city, than a division of the French forces, under the Marquis of Saluzzo, forced an entrance by another. A second detachment of the French army, under the Duke de la Trimouille, soon reinforced Saluzzo; and after some desultory fighting in the streets of Milan, the Imperialists beat a hasty retreat, and retired to Lodi. Milan recovered by this brilliant exploit, King Francis arrived from Vigevano, and made his solemn entry into the capital of his duchy, accompanied by the Duke d'Alençon, and most of the other princes of the blood. The royal banner of the *fleur-de-lis* thus once more floated over the capital of Milan: the Marquis of Pescara, however, sagely observed that it was easier to conquer the Milanese than to retain possession of it.[1]

The news of the king's triumph over his enemies, and the capture of Milan, was received with inconceivable transport throughout France. In her exultation at the valiant achievement of her idolized brother, the Duchess d'Alençon wrote thus to the Bishop of Meaux, to inform him of the surrender of Milan:[2] —

LETTER OF THE DUCHESS D'ALENÇON TO THE BISHOP OF MEAUX.

LYONS, October, 1524.

Although I know well that what is esteemed such good news cannot have been concealed from you, I must write to tell you that

[1] Brantôme, Hommes Illustres.

[2] Milan was captured by Francis about the middle of the month of October, 1524.

God has given the king grace not only to acknowledge privately, but also publicly to testify his sense of the great mercy of Providence, who has recently given him such miraculous prosperity in the conduct of the war. In all the letters which the king has written to Madame, he never fails to ascribe his success to the Almighty, declaring that to no one besides belongs the glory; otherwise it is beyond the power of reason to understand how so large an army, with artillery, could in so short a space journey along such roads; and without magazines never fail of an abundant supply of cheap provision. The rivers then proved fordable; the town of Milan was carried by assault (the foe being put to flight without pillage), the enemy beaten, and none of our men slain; the plague ravaging every quarter of the city, and yet not a single soldier of ours attacked. The king, thereupon, has come to the decision that it is a miraculous work achieved by the direct intervention of God, who, without battle, has given victory to those who believed in him; and who, relying not on their own knowledge and strength, trusted in his paternal goodness. The king, therefore, requires of Madame that she causes it to be everywhere proclaimed and published that all victory, honour, and glory is alone due to the great God of Hosts. I have retained and written to you these his very words, being confident that you will appreciate their import, as does

Vostre bonne mère,

MARGUERITE.[1]

This letter closes the correspondence which has been preserved between the Duchess d'Alençon and the Bishop of Meaux. It could not have been, nevertheless, the last letter which Marguerite wrote to her old friend. Days of tribulation and persecution were at hand for Briçonnet, — days when with the fear of degradation and death before his eyes, his timid but devout spirit shrunk from martyrdom, in defence of the pure truths which his lips had so emphatically inculcated. It was not at this time, then, that Marguerite, with her intrepid spirit and warm affection, could abandon him who had been a guide to her in darkness, a comforter in tribulation, and a valued and revered friend. She might deplore his fall, and bewail her own inability to rescue him from persecution at a period when, during her brother's absence, religious fanaticism raged throughout the land, and even Marguerite's influence succumbed before the counsels which the Chancellor Duprat poured into the regent's

[1] MS. Bibl. Roy., Suppl. Fr., No. 337.

ear; but her desertion of Briçonnet at this period would belie every subsequent act of her life. The evangelical teachers, meanwhile, driven from Paris and Meaux, flocked round the Duchess d'Alençon at Lyons. Marguerite's presence there diffused a halo of light, within which all her friends deemed themselves safe. To sow the seeds of truth in the great and populous city of Lyons was an enterprise fraught indeed with peril, but of vast and absorbing importance. Marguerite was attended by her almoner and chaplain, Maître Michel d'Arande; authorized by the duchess, he preached publicly in Lyons. "She (Marguerite) has with her a doctor of Paris named Maître Michel, her almoner, who only preaches before her the pure Word of God," [1] says the minister of Grenoble, Sebville, in a letter to another of the reformed teachers. Antoine Papillion, a scholar, and a friend of Erasmus, was likewise in the suite of Marguerite. By the command of the duchess, Papillion translated Luther's work on monastic vows: the book was censured by the Sorbonne; and but for Marguerite's interposition, it would have fared ill with its translator. Antoine du Blet, and a rich merchant of the name of Vaugris were also leaders of the reformed party at Lyons.

The Duchess d'Alençon at this time seems to have emancipated herself from the trammels of Rome more than at any subsequent period of her life. Madame, who cared little for religion but when its practice interfered with politics, suffered her daughter to indulge her *penchant* for reform: the pope was the avowed enemy of France; and Louisa therefore heard without concern the papal supremacy assailed even in her very presence. It was not until after the captivity of her son, when the friendship of Rome seemed of paramount importance, and the pontiff was to be won at any sacrifice, that the Duchess d'Angoulême rose, and with the vigour of her powerful intellect, set about crushing the progress of the Reformation in France.

Marguerite, thus at liberty to follow her predilections, bestowed signal marks of favour and approval on the members of the reformed church at Lyons. The gospel, divested of the superstitions of Rome, was, by her command, publicly preached in the church of St. Paul's at Lyons. The duchess, likewise, despatched her almoner, Maître Michel, to preach in the city of Maçon.

[1] MS. de Neufchâtel.

Meantime the Dominican monks of Lyons and Grenoble put themselves into communication with the Sorbonne, and vehemently demanded the arrest of Sebville, minister of the reformed church at Grenoble, and of one Maigret, a converted Dominican, who, under the protection of the Duchess d'Alençon, preached the new doctrines at Lyons. "The heresy ot the Pauvres of Lyons is revived," they wrote; "and schism rends the unity and subverts the authority of the Holy Roman Church." Béda and his colleagues applauded the zeal of the Dominicans; the arrest of Sebville and Maigret was decreed, and their arraignment for heresy commenced. Sebville's friends, however, implored the aid of Marguerite. The duchess wrote to her brother, apparently after having failed to interest the regent and the Chancellor Duprat in the cause of Sebville. The king, who was then before Pavia, on the receipt of his sister's letter, despatched his royal mandate, forbidding the parliament and the Sorbonne to pursue the criminal process against the accused, and commanding his release, if imprisoned.

Maigret, who had hitherto eluded the pursuit of the Faculty, returned triumphantly upon this to Lyons, where, under the patronage of Marguerite, he continued to preach publicly in that city, until the disastrous battle of Pavia gave the death-blow to the work of reform throughout the kingdom.

Sebville was released, though interdicted from preaching; but for a time the hostility of the monks and priests relaxed. Defeat had hitherto attended their efforts to suppress the new doctrines, when they attempted to persecute the friends of the beloved sister of the king. The Duchess d'Alençon boldly avowed her intention to protect the Reformers; the policy of the priesthood, therefore, was to dissimulate until some favourable crisis might restore the ascendency of Rome, and compel even Marguerite herself to conciliate the power she then so daringly defied. The love and confidence which the reformed church of Lyons reposed in its protectress was unbounded. When Maigret was arrested and cast into prison some few months later, and persecution in its direst form menaced the little community of Lyons, still the friends of reform did not despair. "Maigret is taken," exclaimed they; "but, God be praised, Madame d'Alençon is here!"[1]

[1] MS. de Neufchâtel.

While Marguerite thus openly supported the promulgators of the reformed doctrines, the Duchess d'Angoulême soothed the exasperation of the Romish priesthood by the frequent public religious processions which she commanded, to obtain success for the French arms in Italy. The king was still before Pavia; for its garrison had repulsed with determined resolution the efforts of Francis to possess himself of the city. The health of Madame was now completely restored; she was therefore enabled to join in the religious processions which almost daily perambulated the streets of Lyons, attended by her court. Not content with this display of zeal, the Duchess d'Angoulême ordered a general muster of children of all ages, whom she caused to be marshalled in procession to the cathedral, that they might "raise their innocent voices in prayer that God would give prosperity to her son's arms." Marguerite, who always found leisure to correspond with Montmorency, even in the midst of the most pressing avocations, wrote to the marshal to assure him that every possible means was taken by the Duchess d'Angoulême to propitiate Heaven to grant a successful termination to the campaign.

Marguerite, in another of her letters to Montmorency at this period, says: "Madame and her company return to-day to Saint Just, after having caused a general procession to be made throughout the town. Most of the members of the procession received afterwards the Holy Sacrament." From this observation it would appear as if the Duchess d'Alençon had not joined in the procession. She recounts only the doings of "Madame and her company" without allusion to herself, or to her share in this act of homage to the Romish faith. Marguerite, indeed, after the firm attitude she had latterly assumed in repelling the aggressions of Rome, could scarcely bestow public or private countenance on acts which she deemed superstitious, and could not therefore approve.

In such fashion passed the winter of 1524, the last season of comparative peace which the adherents of reform enjoyed for many a weary month. The king was yet besieging Pavia, and dissipating his resources before that city, instead of vigorously pursuing his advantage over the enemy.

Francis was encamped in the park of Mirabello, which extended to the walls of Pavia. His position was so strong

that, had he preserved it, he might have defied the attacks of the Imperialists. On the night of the 23d of February, Bourbon with his Germans, Pescara with his Spaniards, and Lannoy with the Italian troops advanced, determined either to force the park of Mirabello, and thus throw succours into the city, or compel the king to a combat. The attack of the Imperialists was at first repulsed. Surrounded by his brave nobles, and closely attended by the Admiral de Bonnivet, whose counsels had been listened to by his royal master before those of the king's veteran generals, Francis performed prodigies of valour. The Imperialists retired in confusion from Mirabello, — the French artillery, commanded by the brave De Genouillac mowing down their ranks, and committing fearful havoc. The advantage was then decidedly on the part of the French; for the enemy had been repulsed with great loss from Pavia, and driven before their opponents from Mirabello. In the triumph of supposed victory, Francis was unhappily induced, by the advice of De Bonnivet, to leave his strong entrenchments and pursue the enemy into the open country. This was precisely what the Imperial generals desired. Their troops paused in their retreat, rallied, and once more set themselves in hostile array. The battle, on the part of the French, was soon formed. The command of the right wing was committed to the Marshal de la Palice, that of the left to the Duke d'Alençon, while the king commanded the centre.

Arrayed in a coat of arms dazzling with *fleur-de-lis*, and wearing a helmet ornamented with magnificent white plumes, Francis rode surrounded by his valiant body-guard. The battle was bloody and obstinate; at first the advantage, as before, seemed to be in favour of the French; but the Marquis del Guasto, nephew of Pescara, gathering the remnant of the force repulsed at Mirabello, and joined by De Leyva,[1] — who, seeing the Imperial army giving way on all sides, made a vigorous sortie from Pavia at the head of its brave garrison, — this united force attacked the French army in the rear. The assaults of Pescara and Bourbon were chiefly directed on the centre, com-

[1] Antoine de Leyva commenced his military career as a simple soldier in the ranks of the Imperial army. His merit attracted the emperor's attention, who raised him by degrees to the rank of generalissimo of the Italian army, and conferred upon him the titles of Duke de Terra Nova, and Prince of Ascoli.

manded by the king in person, and upon the right wing. Again and again the brave Marshal de la Palice repulsed the enemy. At length his troops, discouraged by these repeated attacks, gave way on all sides and fled in confusion. La Palice himself was soon after shot in cold blood by a Spanish captain named Buzarto.[1] The celebrated Black Bands, under the command of De la Pole, Duke of Suffolk, were cut to pieces to a man, by Freundsberg and his lanz-knechts. Meanwhile a stratagem devised by Pescara, hitherto unknown in military tactics, created confusion and dismay, and carried death into the ranks of the enemy. The marquis had selected and carefully trained a body of fifteen hundred Basque cross-bow men, celebrated for their skill in handling that weapon. At a given signal the ranks of the Spanish infantry opened, and these archers issued forth in small detachments, approached the French cavalry, levelled, discharged their arrows, and retreated again with astonishing rapidity. Then, agile, supple, and spare in figure, these bowmen threw themselves on the ground, and gliding like snakes between the ranks, reckless of being trampled to death by the horses of the cavalry, picked out the French commanders, shot them with unerring aim, and vanished with marvellous dexterity, only to appear again and spread terror and confusion at other points of the combat.[2]

It was at this perilous crisis that the Duke d'Alençon should have led the left wing of the army to the king's aid. Had he intercepted and destroyed this band of archers, and saved the cavalry, the fate of the battle might have been reversed. Bewildered, however, by the confusion and rout of the centre, the Duke d'Alençon, although his division had not sustained a single attack, chose to sound a retreat.[3] In vain his officers remonstrated. The duke's reason seemed overturned by the horrors of the scene, and he angrily repulsed advice. The majority of his officers then deserted his standard, and bravely fought their way through the ranks of the enemy's cavalry to the side of the king, leaving the monarch's craven-hearted brother-in-law to conduct his disgraceful retreat as he could.[4] In less than the space of an hour the French cavalry was almost put to the rout, principally by the murderous assaults of the

[1] Mém. de Du Bellay.
[2] Gailliard, Hist. de François I., t. ii.
[3] Ibid. ; Mém. de Du Bellay.
[4] Mezeray, Grande Hist. de France.

Basque archers. The Duke de la Trimouille fell, pierced through the heart; the brave San Severino, master of the horse to Francis, was shot; the Duke de Longueville, the Count de Tonnerre, René, Bastard of Savoy, the Marshal de Foix, the Admiral de Bonnivet, Bussy d'Amboise, and the Prince de Beaupreau, all died by the side of the king: never was slaughter more complete or remorseless.[1]

The king, meanwhile, covered with blood from a wound in the face, fought with desperate valour. The remnant of the French cavalry still held firm; perhaps had it then been succoured, the day might have been won. The rout and panic throughout the field, however, was soon complete; the flight of the Duke d'Alençon with the rear-guard of the army disheartened the troops; and scarcely had the echoes of the trumpets died away, sounding the retreat by which he consigned his valiant brother-in-law and king to captivity, and inflicted upon France the stain of shameful defeat, than victory declared for the Imperialists. Still the devoted cavalry remained true to their king, and gathered round to defend him against the attack of Del Guasto and Leyva; nor was it until the traitor Constable de Bourbon led his formidable bands to the onslaught that the disgrace of France was consummated by the capture of the king. A general charge was then made with such impetuosity that the ranks of the cavalry encircling the person of the king, broken in many places, could not close again. Surrounded by his enemies, the king fought with a courage inspired by despair. His enemies implored him to surrender; Francis continued to deal blow after blow with unerring vigour and success. At length a Basque bowman sprang forward and dexterously shot the king's horse. With blood streaming from four or five wounds, the king rose from the ground to renew the combat. The French cavalry rallied, and with shouts of admiration and loyalty thronged round him. The Marquis de Pescara, while leading a charge, was hurled from his horse, and trampled beneath the horses of the French cavalry — a peril from which he was with difficulty rescued. The *mêlée* became general; the soldiers, infuriated at the prolonged resistance, threatened to kill the king; already a thousand weapons were pointed at Francis, when Pomperant, equerry to the Constable

[1] Mezeray; Du Bellay.

de Bourbon, rode up, and reckless of danger traversed the savage hosts, exclaiming: "*C'est le Roi! le noble Roi! respect! Epargnez-le!*"[1] The effect of this appeal was instantaneous; to a man the soldiery lowered their weapons. Pomperant then approached the king, and throwing himself at his feet, said: "Sire, the constable, my master, will be happy if your Majesty will admit him into your presence." Francis quickly replied: "No, no; send for the Marquis de Lannoy — to him alone will I yield my sword." The viceroy immediately presented himself, and with one knee bent to the ground, waited till Francis should speak. The king advanced, and hastily said in Italian: "Signor Don Carlos, here is the sword of a king who merits honour. Before this sword was lost, it shed the blood of many of yours. It is not captive through cowardice, but by misfortune." To this address the viceroy replied by presenting his own sword to the king, saying: "This sword also, sire, has shed the blood of several of your subjects. Deign to accept it; for it is not seemly that an officer in the emperor's service should see before him a disarmed king, although a captive."[2]

Francis, after surrendering himself to De Lannoy, requested to be conducted to the Imperial camp, rather than to be conveyed a prisoner to the city of Pavia. His request was granted.

In passing the church of the great Carthusian monastery, on his way to the camp, he asked permission to enter. The first object that met his eye on entering was this inscription: "It is good for me, Lord, that I have been in trouble, that I may learn thy statutes." Francis, deeply affected, knelt and remained for some time in prayer before the High Altar; he then rose and followed the guards assigned him by the viceroy.

De Lannoy immediately despatched a courier to the emperor with the following letter announcing his victory: —

Letter of the Viceroy of Naples to the Emperor Charles V.

Sire, — We gave battle yesterday, and it pleased God to give you victory, which was so well followed up that you hold the King of France a prisoner in my hands. I beseech you, earnestly as it is pos-

[1] Capefigue, Hist. de François I.
[2] Ibid.; Gailliard.

sible to do, to think of your affairs, and to make prompt execution now that God has sent you such a favourable opportunity: for you will never have a more propitious time than the present to demand restitution of the crowns justly appertaining to you, for you owe no obligation to any prince in Italy; nor can they longer hope for protection from the King of France, as you hold him captive. Sire, I think you remember the saying of M. de Bersale, "that God sends to men once in their lives a fruitful August, but that if they allow it to pass without gathering a harvest, it is a chance whether the opportunity is given them again." I say not this believing that your Majesty is disposed to neglect your advantages; but only because I feel it a duty so to speak. Sire, M. de Bourbon acquitted himself well, and performed good service. Sire, the victory which God has given you happened on St. Matthew's day, which is the day of your Majesty's birth.

From the camp where the King of France was lodged, before Pavia, this 25th day of February, 1525.

CHARLES DE LANNOY.[1]

Amongst the nobles captured with Francis, were Henry, King of Navarre, the Marshal de Montmorency, the Duke de Nevers, the high treasurer Babou de la Bourdaizière, Delabarre, high bailiff of Paris, the Count de St. Paul, the Marshal de Fleuranges, the Seigneurs de Brion, de Lorges, d'Annebaut, de Montpezat, du Bellay, and many others.

The chivalry of France, like her monarch, was prostrate at the feet of the Emperor Charles V.

[1] Lanz, Correspondenz des Kaisers, Karl V.

CHAPTER IX.

THE captivity of the king, and the destruction of his army, spread dismay thoughout France. Consternation pervaded all ranks. There was scarcely a family throughout the kingdom that did not bewail with tears the death or captivity of one or more of its members. The very existence of France, as a kingdom, seemed in peril, and the home of the humblest of her people menaced. Without an army, without financial resource, her princes captives, her bravest warriors slain, Europe apparently combined to crush her, civil dissensions raging at home, — such was the deplorable condition of France after the defeat of Pavia. The only hope of the kingdom rested in the genius, courage, and resources of two women; if the king's mother and sister recoiled, appalled at the ruin which seemed impending, if they succumbed before the turbulent parliament, France was lost.

The Duchess d'Angoulême and her daughter were still at Lyons when the news reached France of the disastrous battle of Pavia, by some stragglers from the division of the French army commanded by the Marshal Trivulzio, who had been left to garrison Milan. For the space of a few days, the fortitude of the Duchess d'Angoulême forsook her; overpowered with grief, she wept her son's misfortune, and the threatened ruin of his kingdom. "*Hélas! il ne m'a voulu croire! Ah! que je luy avois tant dit! Que ne m'a-t-il cru, car mes craintes me predisoient tous ses malheurs!*[1] she constantly exclaimed, in her paroxysms of sorrow. It was in vain that Duprat reminded the duchess that the hopes of France and of her son centred in her herself; that the rescue of the king and the preservation of his sceptre depended on her energy; Louisa's inflexible spirit was, for the time, crushed under this heaviest of trials.

[1] Brantôme, Hommes Illustres, Vie de François I.

Nor was the anguish of Marguerite less poignant: her idolized brother was a captive; the honour of her native land prostrate; her husband a traitor, whose cowardice when flying from the perils of the fight so notoriously contributed to its disastrous results. "It cannot be related," says a quaint chronicler of the day,[1] "what lamentations were made and tears were shed by that noble lady, the mother of the king, after she heard the piteous news that her dear and only son the very Christian King Francis, first of that name, was taken and subjected to the will of his vassal, and greatest enemy. Oh, what regrets! Oh, how many were the deplorable lamentations! Oh, how numberless were the grievous exclamations made by the said lady! Afterwards, also, by Madame Marguerite, her only daughter; and by the ladies, demoiselles, princes, dukes, barons, and by all the courtiers likewise: the same mournings were made by the people of Lyons; and the wailing was so great that scarce could it be appeased." Despair and anger by turns overwhelmed Marguerite; and bitter alienation from the duke filled her heart. No pleadings seem this time to have been interposed by the duchess to assuage the burning indignation of the regent against the Duke d'Alençon. France rang with murmurs at the pusillanimity of a prince so nearly allied to the throne; the parliament threatened the duke with impeachment, and every method was resorted to by the populace of Lyons to demonstrate its scorn and derision. Not a word did the Duchess d'Alençon then utter in extenuation of her husband; the intensity of her anguish obliterated compassion from her mind; and she refused to palliate a deed which she regarded as a crime of deepest magnitude. The unfortunate duke, meantime, had not yet entered Lyons. Consumed by remorse and shame, he led the division of the army under his command by slow marches, until a peremptory mandate from the regent compelled him to hasten forward to Lyons. At length the insupportable anxiety of Marguerite and her mother was relieved by the arrival of a courier, one Captain Primrose (probably an officer of the king's brave Scotch guard), and Montpezat,[2] bringing a letter from Francis to his mother. In this letter those celebrated words are not exactly found,

[1] Sebastian Moreau de Villefranche, Référendaire général du Duché de Milan, Docum. sur la Captivité de François I.

[2] A gentleman of the chamber to the king.

supposed to have been written by the king, and which have been quoted by almost every historian: "Tout est perdu fors l'honneur." The king wrote from the Imperial camp immediately after his wounds had been dressed. This letter, so joyfully received by Louisa and the Duchess d'Alençon, was as follows: —

LETTER OF FRANCIS I. TO THE DUCHESS D'ANGOULÊME.

MADAME, — To let you know the extent of my misfortune — of all things, nothing remains to me but honour, and life which is safe. Knowing that in your adversity and sorrow this news would give you comfort, I requested permission to send you this letter — which was readily granted. I beg you not to yield to extremity of grief, but to direct all things with your accustomed prudence; for I have firm hope that at last God will not abandon me. I commend to your care my children and your own. I beseech you, moreover, to grant free passage to the messenger who brings you this letter, as he is bound for Spain, on a mission to the emperor, to learn what kind of treatment I am to receive. Commending myself to your favour and affection, I remain your very humble and obedient son,

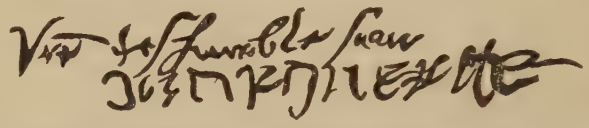
FRANÇOYS.[1]

These few words from her beloved son, who trusted so implicitly in her efforts, appear to have roused the Duchess d'Angoulême from her torpor of grief. To ameliorate the king's position, and to soften the horrors of his captivity, was her first and principal object. Louisa, besides, perceived the necessity of instant and decisive action. The parliament had risen, and insolently questioned her right to an uncontrolled regency; disorders broke out in the provinces; and to consummate the woes of France, anarchy and discord appeared about to overthrow that unity of purpose and aim upon which the very destinies of the kingdom hung. Roused, therefore, by the forcible representation of Duprat, whose undaunted spirit never once quailed beneath a sense of his own unpopularity and the misfortunes of his country, the Duchess d'Angoulême emerged from her retirement. Her dauntless spirit again rose; with a firm hand she grasped the tottering sceptre of France; and with all the powers and prerogatives of the crown at her disposal, Louisa yielded not one to popular clamour; nor in days of unparalleled difficulty

[1] Bibl. Roy., MS. de Colbert, No. 153, fol. 71-2.

did she suffer the slightest concession derogatory to the majesty of the throne to be wrung from her by threat or persuasion.

The regent's first care was to answer her son's letter. In this act it appears Marguerite entreated to join, knowing how precious any token of affection from herself would prove to the king in his lonely prison. Louisa's signature is appended in the usual way at the foot of her letter; while the duchess from want of room, inscribes her name on its margin thus :—



The letter is addressed by Louisa, "To the King, my very dread son, and sovereign lord." Its tenor is as follows :—

MONSEIGNEUR, — I cannot make a better beginning to my letter than to commence by praising God that he has been pleased to preserve your honour, your life, and your health, of which, under your own hand, you have been pleased to assure me. This news has been of such comfort to us in our tribulation that it cannot be sufficiently expressed; also, that you are now in the hands of so worthy a man,[1] who treats you well. Monseigneur, hearing these things, and that it is your intention to endure with resignation the ills that God has inflicted upon you, I, for my part likewise, promise to bear this reverse as you hope and desire, in such fashion for the aid of your little children, and the affairs of the kingdom, that I will not be the occasion of greater grief to you. I beseech God, monseigneur, to have you in his holy keeping, as prays with all my heart,

Your very humble and good mother and subject, LOYSE.
Your very humble sister, MARGUERITE.[2]

After issuing missives to summon the princes of the kingdom to a conference at Lyons, Louisa's next act was to write to the emperor. Her letter is dated from St. Just,[3] March 3d; it was therefore written eight days after the battle of Pavia.

LETTER OF THE DUCHESS D'ANGOULÊME TO THE EMPEROR.

MONSEIGNEUR ET FILS, — Hearing from the bearer of this letter to you the misfortune which has happened to the king, my lord and son,

[1] The Viceroy of Naples.
[2] Docum. sur la Cap. de François I., No. 46.
[3] A suburb of Lyons.

I praised, and still do praise God that he has fallen into the hands of the prince I love best in Christendom, feeling assured that the greatness of your fortune will not make you forgetful of the close kindred and affinity subsisting between you. Moreover, the fact which makes me more confident thereof, is the good that will be universally felt throughout the world when you are both united by the bonds of frank and loyal friendship. I beseech you very humbly, monseigneur, to reflect upon these words; and in the meantime to command that the king may be treated with the respect which your honour and his rank demand. Moreover, if it will please you to permit me to receive frequent tidings of his health and welfare, this courtesy on your part will oblige her whom you have called mother, and who now beseeches you to show the affection of a brother to her son,

Votre très humble mère, LOYSE.[1]

The emperor received the news of the capture of the king with his usual self-possession. He was conversing with some lords of his court, when a courier impetuously made his way into his presence, and kneeling at Charles's feet, presented him with the despatch from his three generals, the Viceroy of Naples, Bourbon, and Pescara, announcing the great victory achieved at Pavia. The emperor doffed his plumed cap and composedly proclaimed the intelligence to his courtiers; he then retired into the adjoining apartment, and kneeling before a crucifix, continued apparently absorbed in prayer for some time. Charles afterwards peremptorily forbade all public rejoicings for his victory; he interdicted fireworks, the pealing of bells, and every other outward token of joy. "God forbid," exclaimed he, "that by odious festivals I should insult the misfortune of my brother! Public rejoicings are only becoming when given in thanksgiving for successes obtained over the enemies of religion."[2] Notwithstanding this apparent disinterestedness and modesty, the emperor prepared to avail himself of his victory with all the pertinacity of purpose which the position of the captive king permitted him to exercise.

The first act of the prince whom Louisa with politic dissimulation declared that "she loved best in Christendom," was to send the following reply to the letter written by the duchess in the first outpourings of her maternal grief:—

[1] Bibl. Roy., MSS. de Béth., No. 8471.
[2] Gailliard, Hist. de François I.

Letter of the Emperor Charles V. to the Duchess d'Angoulême.

Madame la Régente, — I have received your letter by the Captain Primrose, who also brought me news of the king your son. I rejoice much to hear that he is now in good health, and therefore relieved from the most serious consequences of his position; for not only will I cause him to receive such treatment as becomes the affinity between us, but moreover, I will do what my cousin and second chamberlain, the Count de Rieux, the bearer of this letter, will tell you, whom I am sending to visit the king on my behalf. I have ordered also that everything conducive to his health may be liberally supplied to him as if to myself. I have likewise given directions to my brother-in-law and lieutenant-general in Italy, the Duke de Bourbon, and to the Count de Lannoy, my Viceroy of Naples, that we may frequently receive letters from the king, as much for your consolation and mine as for the prompt settlement of affairs between the said sieur your son, myself, and my allies.

As it is not my desire to carry on the war if I can promote this said peace, I have caused the things to be noted in writing which it is my intention, and that of my allies, to recover from the king, as justly belonging to us; which paper my cousin De Rieux will show you and then afterwards present to the king your son, in the hope that you will both maturely consider and not refuse demands so reasonable and just, and which will insure the welfare and repose of Christendom.

Madame la Régente, may God continue to you his holy protection.

Written at Madrid this 25th day of March.

Charles.[1]

These conditions, to which the emperor refers in his letter to the duchess and that the Count de Rieux was commissioned to submit for the king's approbation, were the renunciation on the part of Francis of his pretensions to Italy; the restitution of the duchy of Burgundy to the emperor; the renunciation by the king of his suzerainty over the provinces of Flanders and Artois; the re-establishment of the Duke de Bourbon in his estates, duchies, and appanages, with the addition of Provence and Dauphiny, — the whole to be erected into a kingdom, to be inherited to all perpetuity by Bourbon and his descendants; the payment to the King of England of the sums owing to him by the

[1] Bibl. Roy., MSS. de Colbert, 70–72 t. Serilly, No. 53.

emperor; and lastly, the marriage of the infanta Maria, niece of the emperor, with the dauphin,—such were the exorbitant demand of the emperor and his allies.[1]

The king meantime had been removed to the fortress of Pizzighitone, near to Cremona, pending the imperial decision as to his future destination, under the guard of the Seigneur Alarçon, an officer much esteemed and trusted by Charles. The deportment of the king since his misfortune elicited the sympathy and admiration of his captors. His affability, kingly deportment, and gracious manners so fascinated the Spaniards that it was deemed prudent by the viceroy to prohibit access to the tent of the king, under pretext that it incommoded his Majesty to receive visits. The day following the battle of Pavia, the Constable de Bourbon, moved by some inexplicable impulse, demanded audience of his injured master. Francis assented to the interview, but at the same time admitted to his presence Pomperant, the officer who had been instrumental in saving his life before his surrender to the viceroy. The king addressed a few grave and dignified words to the constable,[2] while he received Pomperant with that gracious condescension which Francis knew so well how to assume. The Marquis of Pescara the king greeted likewise with flattering marks of distinction. The marquis, a practised courtier, instead of displaying before the king a magnificence of dress and equipage, as many of the German and Spanish nobles did, appeared in the presence of Francis clad in a simple black habit, without sword or decorations. The king was so charmed with this refined compliment on the part of Pescara that he bestowed upon him extraordinary notice, conversing on the various events of the battle, and ascribing the honours of the victory to the military science displayed by the marquis.[3]

The Marshal de Montmorency meanwhile wrote to inform Marguerite of the safe arrival of her brother at Pizzighitone, and of the courteous treatment which he received. "Madame, as often as I am able I will send you news of the king, for the pleasure I know it gives you," said Montmorency to the duchess.[4] "I beg you to believe that he is now in as good

[1] Mezeray, Hist. de France.

[2] Brantôme, Hommes Illustres, Vie du Connétable de Bourbon.

[3] Ibid., Vie du Marquis de Pescara.

[4] Lettre du Maréchal de Montmorency à Madame d'Alençon, Docum. sur le Cap. de François I., No. 52.

health as ever he was, as it will please you to hear from Pierre Pont,[1] the bearer of this. I beseech you, madame, to send us news frequently of your own health, and of that of Madame; for it is the thing which now gives the king most pleasure." De la Barre, bailiff of Paris, and a captive at Pizzighitone with Francis, confirmed in a letter to Madame, the news of the king's health. "The king, thanks be to God, is in as good health as possible. He is in the hands of the Captain Alarçon, who, I assure you, Madame, treats him as yet well and courteously. The said lord, the king, commands me to say that he prays you to write a few words to thank the Sieur Alarçon for the good treatment which he receives. Also, the said lord begs that you will send some money, and likewise silver vessels for his own table. He also commands me to say that he will soon despatch to you M. de Brion, who is to proceed to Spain, and the Marshal de Montmorency, who comes to raise his ransom."[2] All the king's effects, his superb camp equipage, and vessels of gold and silver for the table, had fallen as spoils to the victorious soldiery of Pavia. His treasure, also, was confiscated; so that Francis, until Madame sent him fresh supplies, found himself compelled to borrow the sum of 221 livres Tournois from the Viceroy of Naples.

Marguerite immediately wrote in reply to her *protégé* Montmorency, to congratulate the marshal upon his having been permitted to share his royal master's captivity; and to express her envy of the good fortune and privilege he enjoyed in being able to console and comfort the king in his adversity. The first few lines of this letter have been lost or effaced: Marguerite continues thus:—

The envy I feel at seeing you so good a servant is not so great but that I thank God for the grace that he has given you, in permitting you to serve, in this his hour of need and misfortune, him who deserves it of you. Believe me, the joy which the king felt at seeing you has been so sensibly reflected here that with us it is no longer a question of weariness and sickness, but of eager anxiety to obey his mandates. True is it, nevertheless, that all my life I shall bear you envy that I cannot perform towards him (the king) the offices you are now fulfilling; for where the will to do so surpasses all that you can feel,

[1] A courier.

[2] Lettre de M. de la Barre, bailli de Paris à Madame, Docum. sur la Cap. de François I., No. 45.

fortune serves me ill, by rendering the way difficult to me, a woman. I hope that God, who knows this my earnest desire, will reserve for me an hour when I, too, may have my turn; when life, death, and everything which can either be feared or desired, will be voluntarily sacrificed for him. I beseech the Almighty to grant me this opportunity. I pray you (if you think it expedient) commend me to monseigneur the viceroy; for the courtesy which he shows towards the king makes me feel so obliged to him that I cannot help asking you to express to him what you know I feel. As often as you can, send Madame news of her son, on whose deliverance and health depends her life and consolation, as on the well-being of both these personages rests that of your good cousin,

MARGUERITE.[1]

That opportunity for serving her brother which Marguerite so ardently desired was finally granted to her. More than the devotion of Montmorency and the king's favourites could do to solace his weary captivity, did Marguerite achieve. Her presence shone as a cheering light to Francis, recalling him to life, energy, and hope. When the king again clasped his beloved sister to his heart, despair vanished before her inspiriting counsels, and he felt that life was worth preserving, if only for Marguerite's sake.

This letter to Montmorency was accompanied by a joint letter from Marguerite and her mother to the king. The health of Francis, his welfare in his distant prison, and their zeal for his service, absorbed the thoughts and the time of his mother and sister. The first part of this curious and interesting letter is written by Madame, the latter half by Marguerite, and it is signed by both. The Duchess d'Angoulême wrote extremely well, and always expresses herself with wonderful precision for the times in which she lived. Her writing is smaller, and of a darker and more decided character than that of her daughter.

LETTER OF THE DUCHESS D'ANGOULÊME AND OF MARGUERITE D'ALENÇON TO THE KING.[2]

MONSEIGNEUR, — The joy we yet feel from the good news contained in the letters which it has pleased you to write to me,[3] your mother,

[1] MS. Bibl. Royale, F. de Béthune, No. 8550.

[2] Docum. sur la Cap. du Roi François I., No. 53.

[3] These letters were probably brought by M. de Brion.

reassures us so much for the safety of that health upon which our lives depend, that it seems as if we ought not to hold other discourse than to praise God, and pray for the continuation of such joyful tidings as the best and most reviving nourishment upon which we can subsist.[1] And because that God has always mercifully permitted that our trinity should be one, we beseech you that this letter, presented to you, our third, may be received with the same affection as with all their hearts, it is offered to you by

Vos très humbles et obéissantes mère et seur,

LOYSE,
MARGUERITE.

The figure of "notre trinité," to express their mutual love, concord, and union, is continually dwelt upon by Madame and her children in their poems. It was also celebrated throughout France by the poets of the day: Jean Marot, father of the famous Clément Marot, who retained his office of court poet for some time after the accession of Francis, sings the praises of this loyal trinity in the following sonnet:—

Un seul cueur en trois corps aujourd'hui voy en France,
Regnant en doux accord, sans quelque differance,
D'amour tant enlacez, qu'il semble que nature,
Les formant ayt chassé dissension, murmure,
Pour nourrir sans discords amoureuse alliance.

Un pin, bien m'en records, en Savoye eut croissance,
Si très beau, que dès lors le lys pour sa plaisance
Fleuron y a entez et mis par géniture,
Un seul cueur en trois corps.

L'un est entre les forts nommé pour sa puissance,
François, franc aux efforts, des François la fiance;
La seur bien cognoissez, duchesse nette et pure,
Bonne trop plus qu'assez. O noble géniture!
Vous êtes unicorps comme une trine essence:
Un seul cueur en trois corps.

Whilst Marguerite and the regent thus solaced their grief by frequent communications to the captive king, the parliament recommenced its vexatious cabals, reckless of the danger to which the kingdom was exposed. In the emergencies of the government, it discerned its hour of vengeance for the humilia-

[1] The Duchess d'Alençon here takes the pen from her mother and concludes the letter.

tions inflicted by the Chancellor Duprat; for the creation of salable charges in its august body; for the enforced enregistration of the Concordat; for the reversal of its decrees against heresy; and above all it hoped to humble the pride of the imperious regent. Accordingly, when the Duke de Vendôme, Governor of Champagne, passed through Paris on his way to confer with Louisa at Lyons, the parliament sent a deputation to offer to the duke the regency of the kingdom, — assuring him that the parliament would by acclamation support his pretensions. Vendôme prudently refused the dangerous honour. Loyal as he was brave, the duke replied to the factious senators that the service of the king, and the orders of Madame summoned him to Lyons, whither he was bound, to deliberate with her upon the measures requisite to insure the preservation of the kingdom and the liberation of the king.[1] Sensible how greatly she was indebted to the loyal obedience of Vendôme, the Duchess d'Angoulême received him on his arrival at Lyons with distinction; and she at once nominated him president of the Council of State. Louisa's first interview with Vendôme and the chancellor, after her son's captivity, is touchingly told by the quaint chronicler of the disaster of Pavia, Sebastian Moreau: "The said Seigneur de Vendôme, accompanied by the chancellor and the chiefs of the Council, at length presented himself before the said lady regent, to represent humbly that her tears and lamentations would not avail her, or deliver the king from the hands of his enemies; but that it was necessary to look after affairs, and so provide a prompt and efficient remedy. To which remonstrance the said lady replied: —

"'Monsieur de Vendôme and M. le Chancelier, the king places perfect confidence in both of you, as in those who have ever faithfully maintained and supported the crown of France; it is for you therefore to deliberate what advice you will presently give me, and to look to all that is necessary for the safety of the kingdom; for I am so distracted with the thought of the miserable misfortune that has befallen us that I scarcely know where I am or what I do. Nevertheless, sure I am that there will presently arrive from Italy many poor gentlemen and soldiers in great poverty, who have lost both baggage and horses. It seems to me, therefore, advisable, first to provide lodging for

[1] Mém. de Du Bellay; Belleforest, Hist. de France, t. ii.

the soldiers, and to make a free gift of a certain sum of money to the captains and gentlemen in order to enable them to retire comfortably to their homes, that none may take opportunity to pillage our poor people here in France.'

"Tears fell in great abundance from the eyes of the said lady as she spoke," continues the chronicler, "and she entreated them most affectionately not to reply, but to manage so that she might not be grieved by the sight of these poor soldiers. The Duke de Vendôme, however, amazed at the extent of Madame's benevolence, considering the impoverished state of the finances, replied, not wishing to distress her by remonstrance: 'Madame, M. le Chancelier and your Council will so order this matter that by the help of God we will give you content.' This matter settled, Duprat advanced, and humbly prostrating himself at the feet of Madame, said: —

"'Madame, you are well aware that I am, and shall always remain as long as I live, a good and loyal subject of the king your son, of yourself, and of the crown of France; and that in the exercise of my office of chancellor I have never knowingly suffered wrong. I now tell you very humbly that I am ready and willing to do and accomplish all that it may please you to command. I beseech you to put aside this melancholy, and to hold council diligently; to do all that is requisite to assemble the states-general of the kingdom; to order an efficient guard on the frontiers: to restore order to the finances; to despatch to the king some gentlemen to comfort him; and to transact all other requisite and necessary business.' My said lady the regent," adds Sebastian Moreau, "listened attentively to the chancellor, who could not refrain, as he spoke, from tears and sighs; then, in a few sad words, she replied, 'that for the present she committed the management of all things to M. de Vendôme and to himself, the two chief personages of the kingdom.'"

Vendôme and Duprat then took leave of Madame, and retired to hold a conference with the Council. The regent, however, much as she seemed to be overpowered with grief, would not permit a single ordinance to be promulgated without her previous sanction. It was first resolved to despatch the fleet to bring back the residue of the body of troops from Italy commanded by the Duke of Albany; which had been inconsiderately detached

by the king from the main army before the battle of Pavia, to achieve the conquest of the kingdom of Naples. To propitiate the parliament, the Duchess d'Angoulême proposed to associate a parliamentary commission to the Council of State; and to request from this committee an immediate *résumé* of its advice for the conduct of the government.[1]

At length the Duke d'Alençon and his recreant division of the army entered Lyons. Pursued by the taunts of his countrymen, the duke, overwhelmed by his disgrace, had fallen alarmingly ill. Compelled by the peremptory orders of the regent to present himself before her on his arrival at Lyons, the duke was received by his haughty mother-in-law in stern disdain.[2] The measure of the unhappy duke's disgrace seemed complete when his wife also contemptuously refused to admit him to her presence, or to hold communication with the betrayer of her brother. Abandoned by all, the duke retired to his lodgings, and in momentary fear of arrest he resolved to quit Lyons privately, and retire to Argentan; but the tumult of his feelings so increased the attack of pleurisy from which he was suffering that in a state of extreme mental and bodily indisposition he took to his bed.

The conflict in Marguerite's mind was severe: she never loved her husband; and it was alone through the advice of the Bishop of Meaux that she had constrained herself to live on more amicable terms with him before his departure for Italy. In the height of her resentment and grief she had denied him access to her presence; yet Marguerite was sensible that if she had interposed her influence with the regent, she might have saved the duke from public disgrace, and probably have obtained for him permission to retire to his own domains. The Duke de Vendôme, president of the Council of Regency, and brother-in-law of the Duke d'Alençon,[3] appears likewise to have abandoned him to his fate.

The state of the unhappy duke, meanwhile, daily grew more alarming; consumed by fever, and crushed under a sense of irretrievable disgrace, he anxiously awaited death. Marguerite was at length informed of his deplorable condition. The stern whispers of conscience admonished her that her conduct towards her unfortunate husband had not been characterized by that forbear-

[1] Capefigue, Hist. de François I. [2] Gailliard.

[3] The Duke de Vendôme was the husband of Françoise, the eldest sister of the Duke d'Alençon.

ance which religion inculcated; and compassion for his desolate condition moved her now to make earnest intercession in his favour, and, with the assent of Madame, she resolved to visit him without delay.

This concession of Marguerite's, if at any time it could have been of avail, came now too late, — the duke's malady was beyond the reach of human skill. From thenceforwards, however, to the period of his demise, Marguerite was unremitting in her care and attention. Before his decease the Duke d'Alençon expressed great desire to obtain the king's pardon. Marguerite, who had now apparently taken up her abode with her husband, undertook to convey this desire to her brother, as no one had presumed to mention the duke's name to the king; but from the guarded manner in which the duchess alluded to her husband, even Marguerite seems to have been reluctant to recall to his mind the way in which he had been deserted. The duchess also had another reason for writing to the king: it had been reported to her that Francis, out of voluntary penance and humiliation, intended to keep a rigid fast throughout the ensuing Lent, eating neither flesh nor eggs. This resolution created apprehension in Marguerite's mind, as it appears that fish was injurious to her brother's constitution.

The Duchess d'Alençon at the same time despatched a curious epistle to the Marshal de Montmorency, who shared her brother's captivity at Pizzighitone. She sent him the Epistles of St. Paul; probably the very copy so treasured by Marguerite, which she had received from the Bishop of Meaux, with instructions to present it, in his name, to the king. Marguerite never omitted an opportunity, when it was possible, to draw her brother's attention to the truths of religion; or to conciliate his favour and protection for the adherents of reform. The duchess wrote thus to the Marshal de Montmorency: —

LETTER OF THE DUCHESS D'ALENÇON TO ANNE DE MONTMORENCY.

MON COUSIN, — There is living hereabouts a devout recluse,[1] who for the last three years has commissioned one whom I know well to pray constantly for the prosperity of the king — which has been done. This individual has lately assured me that if the king will be pleased,

[1] Probably the Duchess d'Alençon herself.

when he retires, to read every day as a prayer the Epistles of St. Paul, — God, for His own honour and glory, will give him speedy deliverance; for He has promised in His Holy Gospel, that those who love the truth, by truth they shall be free. Because I think that the king has not a copy of the Holy Scriptures, I send you mine; praying you to entreat him, in my name, to read it; for I firmly believe that the Holy Ghost, who inspired these epistles, will do for him as great things as for the writers thereof. God is not less powerful and bountiful; and His promises are always true. He has humbled us by this captivity; but He has not abandoned us: on the contrary, God has bestowed upon us patience and trust in His mercy for the relief of our affliction, which is lightened by the consolation of a more perfect knowledge of Himself. No one, I feel sure, knows this better than the king; who, despite his personal captivity, never felt greater freedom of mind than at present, or a firmer trust in the mercy of Him to whom I daily pray that His will may be done respecting the king. None can, nevertheless, experience greater weariness and sorrow to feel herself unable to aid this cause, than

Vostre bonne cousine,

MARGUERITE.[1]

Marguerite's entreaty to her brother not to injure his health by a too rigorous fast prevailed. "The king fasts upon turtles this Lent, which he finds very good," says the high-bailiff of Paris, De la Barre, in a letter to the regent.

The report of Montpezat and others on the troubled state of the kingdom gave great uneasiness to the king. Soon after he received Marguerite's letter Francis despatched Montpezat to Lyons, with letters for the Duchess d'Alençon, the regent, and the parliament. Montpezat likewise brought an address from the king to his subjects, exhorting them to unity, and to implicit and dutiful obedience to Madame, whom again the king expressly named regent of the kingdom. There is little doubt but that Marguerite's guarded and submissive mention of her husband had produced its desired effect upon Francis. From the cautious language in which his sister expressed herself, the king detected her grief that one so closely related to herself could have proved false and disloyal; and by sending a gracious message to the duke, he sought to comfort Marguerite, and to assure her of his unswerving affection. Nevertheless, Francis was highly incensed

[1] MS. Bibl. Royale, F. Béthune, 8562.

at the conduct of the Duke d'Alençon, and found it difficult to pardon the cowardly desertion of a prince upon whom he had bestowed such signal marks of royal bounty and honour. There is every reason to suppose that had the Duke d'Alençon survived until the return of the king, his near connection with Marguerite would not have saved him from the loss of his military dignities, and perpetual banishment from court.

During the dreary hours of his captivity in the lone castle of Pizzighitone, the king employed himself in composing a poem on his reverses, addressed to his mistress, the Countess de Châteaubriant. In this poem, or elegy, he thus indignantly alludes to the duke's disgraceful flight at Pavia: —

"Trop tost je veis ceux-là qu'avois laissez
De tout honneur, et vertu délaissez
Les trop meschans s'enfuyoient sans combat,
Et entre eulx tous n'avorent pour débat,
Si n'est fouyr, laissant toute victoire
Pour faire d'eulx honteuse la mémoire.
Malheureux! las! Et qui vous conduisoit,
A telle erreur, ne qui vous adisoit,
Abandonner fuyans en disarroy,
Honneur, pays, amys, et vostre roy!"[1]

From the bedside of the duke Marguerite again wrote to the king. The gradual approach of her husband's death seems to inspire her with awe and dismay.

Letter of the Duchess d'Alençon to Francis I.

Monseigneur, — Thanking God for your good health, and for the worthy and courteous treatment that you continue to receive from the viceroy and the Sieur Alarçon, I write to assure you that since the departure of Montpezat Madame has followed your desire relative to her health, and I think that she is now better and stronger than she has been for some time. She hears news daily of your children, who are all of them well, and improving as much in beauty as in strength and virtue, so that it appears as if God in our sore tribulation had given them to us so healthful and well disposed for our especial consolation. Monsieur d'Angoulême,[2] however, excels them all in amiability. As for your poor sister, she is writing this letter to you, seated at the

[1] Bibl. Royale, MS. de Baluze, No. 370.

[2] Charles, Duc d'Angoulême, the king's favourite child. The little prince had just entered his third year.

foot of Monsieur d'Alençon's bed. He begs me to unite his very humble homage with my own, and to say that if he could but have seen you before his death, he should have departed more contentedly. I do not know what to say to you about him, monseigneur — all things are in the hands of God. Nevertheless, I entreat that no regret you may feel for his fate, or for me, may be suffered to give you pain or anxiety. Be assured, sire, that whatever may happen, I trust that God will give me strength to endure it; and especially to guard Madame from disquietude, that our grief may not cause you the sorrow which we so greatly fear. Supplicating God that he will preserve, and speedily restore you again to us, is the sole desire of your

Very humble and very obedient subject and sister,

MARGUERITE.[1]

Marguerite was evidently much dejected when she wrote thus to her brother. Her husband then lay at the point of death, and on the eleventh of April he expired, about three days after the despatch of this last letter to her brother. In a curious MS. chronicle in rhyme, preserved in the Bibliothèque Royale, the author gives a minute account of the last moments of the Duke d'Alençon, of which he declares himself to have been a witness. The duke's decease, the chronicler states, happened on Tuesday, in Passion Week. Early on the morning of that day Marguerite was sitting by his couch reading aloud some devout book, when she paused and reminded the duke that he had not received the Holy Communion on the previous Sunday, and earnestly exhorted him not to delay longer in fulfilling that duty: —

"Promis m'avez, Monsieur, de recevoir,
Mais vous n'avez pas fait vostre devoir;
Or, puys qu'avez au dimanche failly,
Que ce mardy soit de vous assailly."

The duke assented, and rising from his bed he partook of the sacrament. Afterwards he dined; and then, feeling his suffering augment, he summoned Marguerite again to his side and begged her to read and speak to him of God, and requested her not to leave him. Marguerite then read aloud those chapters of the Gospel which recount the death and passion of Jesus Christ, to which he listened with edifying devotion, making observations so humble and to the purpose that five ecclesiastics who

[1] MS. Bibl. Royale, Suppl. fr. No. 2722.

were present around the duke's bed could not repress their admiration. The Duchess d'Angoulême meantime had entered the apartment. As soon as the duke perceived her he said, in a voice of deep emotion: "Madame, I beseech you to make known to the king that since the day of his capture I have anxiously awaited death. Heaven favoured me not sufficiently to ordain that I should share his fate, or else lose my life in the service of him who is at once my king, my brother, and my indulgent master." The dying prince then took the hand of the regent and pressed it to his lips. "Madame, I ask nothing now but your gracious favour," said he again; "except that I commend to your love and care her who has been my loving consort for so many years; so wise and virtuous has been her conduct that well does she deserve applause from me." The Bishop of Lisieux then advanced to administer the sacrament of Extreme Unction. The Duchess d'Angoulême upon this retired, making a sign to her daughter to follow her. The duke, however, grasping Marguerite's hand, exclaimed, "Do not leave me!" By the duke's desire, a confidential officer of his household, Monsieur de Chardeniers, was then summoned to the bedside. The duke requested him to bid farewell for him to all his servants, and to thank them in his name for their past services. He said that he had not strength left to see and address them himself; and that after his decease Marguerite would be too overpowered to grant them audience: —

"Je crains de faire fondre en pleurs.
Mes officiers et povres serviteurs,
En leur disant l'adieu qui leur desplaist.
Vous leur direz, compère, s'il vous plaist,
Les priant tous de se reconforter.
Ma femme aussi ne sçauroit supporter
Après ma mort parler à eux ensemble;
Dont myeulx que nul le ferez, ce me semble."

Then turning towards Marguerite, the duke gave her some final directions respecting his funeral obsequies, refusing to leave written instructions, —

"Car il sçavoit que son vouloir seroit
Mort comme vif, et luy obeyroit."

Afterwards Duke Charles resigned himself to his spiritual devotions, being diligently assisted by the Bishop of Lisieux;

and he received the last sacraments of the Church with every outward mark of penitence. Soon after, the duke exclaimed that he felt the approach of death, and that his limbs and senses one after the other were failing him: —

" Je m'y en voys, mon Dieu, avansez vous,
Car ce mourir plus que vivre m'est doulx.
Puy dist: Je sens mes membres et mon corps,
Mes sens douloir l'un après l'autre mortz.
Chacun disoit la mort de douleur plaine,
Et je me meurs et n'ay ny mal, ny peyne,
O mon Seigneur, je voy la raison forte
Car ma douleur vostre filz en croix porte ! "

Then calling Marguerite to him, the duke tenderly embraced and kissed her, saying: —

" Adieu, pour un bien peu de temps
Lequel passé, nous nous verrons contans ! "

He then ceased, and partial insensibility ensued. The Bishop of Lisieux put a crucifix to his lips; the duke opened his eyes, again murmured the name of "Jesus," and expired.[1]

The grave position of public affairs rendered it impossible that the duke's funeral obsequies should be conducted with any degree of the pomp befitting his birth.[2] Marguerite does not even appear to have passed in retirement the forty days of seclusion and mourning usual for personages of her rank; probably the serious and complicated politics of the day prevented her from withdrawing her aid from the regent for so long a period.

During the interval of the illness and decease of the Duke d'Alençon, the regent had been administering the affairs of the kingdom with consummate dexterity. The letter which Montpezat brought from the king not only commanded the parliament to recognize the authority of the regent, but Francis moreover directed that it should immediately proceed to the nomination of the commission demanded by Louisa, to aid her in recruiting the finances of the kingdom. The parliament

[1] Poëme intitulé les Prisons, believed by many to have been composed by Marguerite herself; others attribute it to Guillaume Philander, or Filandrier. Bibl. Roy., MSS. de la Marre, No. 7576. A portion of this curious chronicle is published by M. Le Roux de Lincy in the appendix No. 1 to the Heptameron. In the Bibl. Royale it is included amongst Marguerite's poetical works.

[2] The Duke d'Alençon was buried in the church of St. Just, at Lyons.

obeyed these, the express commands of the king; recognized the authority of the duchess, and nominated twelve members to assist her by counsel in all important deliberations.

Meanwhile, the pulpits throughout France resounded with the clamours against the heretics, to whom, as in times of old, the misfortunes and calamities of the country were imputed. The Sorbonne recommenced its agitation. Béda, Duchesne, and Lecouturier bound themselves by a solemn engagement not to let so favourable an opportunity escape of sweeping the realm of France clear of heresy and its supporters. The parliament, instead of repressing this ill-timed zeal, joined the university in its turbulent threats. While the king was a prisoner Madame might be intimidated, and the Pragmatic again supersede the Concordat. The parliament, therefore, commenced the exercise of its newly conferred powers by addressing an earnest remonstrance, or in other words, a sound objurgation to the regent, on the conduct to be observed by the government with regard to the new doctrines. "Heresy," said they, "has raised its head amongst us; and the king, by failing to erect scaffolds against it, has drawn down the wrath of Heaven on the kingdom. We were not worthy," continued the senators, "of so holy a decretal as the Pragmatic. God punished us by permitting that we, of our own blind will, should deprive ourselves of it, and now we are punished for the sin of having rejected it." [1]

To this remonstrance the regent returned the politic answer: "That it would be an insult to her son to annul his acts during his captivity; but as soon as the king should be restored to his kingdom she would use her best endeavours to persuade him to comply with the wishes of his parliament." [2]

During these angry debates a circumstance occurred which unfortunately enabled the parliament to demand the expulsion of the adherents of reform from the kingdom, with still more acrimonious pertinacity. Tumultuous bands of armed peasantry rose in Alsace and in the German provinces bordered by the Rhine, professing themselves partisans of the reformed religion; while they ravaged and pillaged the country under pretence of restoring the apostolic practice of a community of goods. Their plan of procedure was the same as that pursued in the formidable insurrection of the Jacquerie in the reign of King John;

[1] Gailliard, Hist. de François I., tome v. [2] Ibid.

and the panic the lawless outrages created spread terror throughout the country. After ravaging Lorraine and Alsace, these brigands, to the number of fifteen thousand, thinking to take advantage of the troubles of France, made a descent on the provinces of Burgundy and Champagne. The Count de Guise levied a body of six thousand men, and promptly marched for their repression, without consulting the regent, or her Council. Louisa afterwards severely censured him for his imprudence in exposing to the chance of defeat the only efficient body of troops within the kingdom. The Count de Guise, nevertheless, put these lawless insurgents to flight with great slaughter; numbers were drowned in their hurried retreat across the Rhine, and the survivors were so scattered and intimidated as to render their reunion in a hostile attitude impossible.[1] The Chancellor Duprat induced the regent to signify her displeasure at this gallant, though unauthorized action on the part of the Count de Guise; upon which, the parliament, ever hostile and intractable, set about rendering this censure null by moving a vote of thanks in a full assembly of the chambers, to the count, whom they designated as the "preserver of his country."[2]

The regent, wearied at length of the vexatious hostility to her measures displayed by the parliament, resolved to propitiate public opinion, and clear herself from the charge of favouring heresy by withdrawing her protection from the reformers, whose malpractices and disregard of authority, according to the manifestoes of the Sorbonne, had been so signally displayed in the recent invasion of France by the armed brigands of Alsatia. This resolution, so unscrupulously adopted by the king's mother, answered the double purpose of diverting into another channel the turbulent propensities of the parliament, and of propitiating Pope Clement VII., who had it in his power to stir up Italy in hostile array against the conqueror of Pavia. The pope afforded Louisa an opening for this wily move, without compelling her to make absolute overtures to the enemy of France, by addressing to her a papal brief of condolence on the captivity of her son, given under the fisherman's seal. Despite the

[1] Mém. de Du Bellay; Mezeray, Grande Hist. de France.

[2] Gailliard, Hist. de François I. The registration of this vote of thanks to the Duke de Guise took place August 12, 1528, after it had received the sanction of King Francis.

prayers and remonstrances of the Duchess d'Alençon, the proscription of the "innovators" was resolved upon in council. Every art of sophistry and double-dealing was resorted to by the doctors of the Sorbonne, to throw odium on the adherents of reform. Garbled extracts of their writings were circulated; personal invectives were unsparingly hurled from the pulpits of Paris, and every species of private defamation was deemed lawful and praiseworthy. The Duchess d'Angoulême, by the counsel, of Duprat then wrote to the pope to inquire what his will was respecting the suppression of heresy throughout the kingdom; at the same time she despatched the Bishop of Senlis to the Sorbonne to request the opinion of that orthodox body. This concession of the regent to popular clamour was hailed by the Faculty with triumph. The members could scarcely credit their senses when the court, before so arbitrary and despotic in snatching away the victims they had doomed to destruction, sent a bishop with a message informing the Sorbonne of the fact they were so sorely alive to, — "that Luther's detestable doctrines were everywhere gaining fresh adherents throughout the kingdom," and requesting its advice for the extirpation of heresy. Noël Béda was commissioned to convey to the regent the oft-told result of the tumultuous debates of past years. At any rate, in this the Sorbonne proved itself consistent, — that which it had propounded to King Francis on the arraignment of Lefèvre, Berquin, and Briçonnet, it again addressed to the more compliant ears of the Duchess d'Angoulême. "Since the sermons, the disputations, the protests, and books, which we have so frequently put forth against this heresy fail in arresting its progress, the writings of these heretics must be prohibited by proclamation; if these means are not sufficient, force and constraint must be employed against the persons of these false teachers; for those who resist the light must be subdued by punishments and terrors,"[1] was the response of the university to the demand of Louisa and her council. Clement VII., meantime, was not backward in availing himself of the favourable dispositions of the regent. He sent a cardinal's hat to the Chancellor Duprat, with a papal ratification of his appointment to the archbishopric of Sens; and he gave Louisa flattering hopes of stirring up a diversion in Italy favourable for

[1] Crevier, Hist. de l'Université.

the release of the king. These conciliatory overtures being graciously accepted, the pope boldly proposed the introduction of the Inquisition into France, as an infallible means for eradicating heresy, and addressed a brief to the parliament to that effect.[1] The papal recommendation was received with triumph, both by the parliament and the Sorbonne. The council of regency formally signified its assent to the measure, and proceeded to the consideration of the means to be adopted for its execution.

With unfeigned distress and consternation, Marguerite beheld this resolution. Death, apostasy, or proscription menaced her friends; and she felt herself powerless to rescue. Satisfied with procuring for her daughter liberty of conscience and exemption from persecution, as regarded her own personal convictions, Louisa steeled herself against entreaty; the requirements of inexorable state policy were more to the stern mind of the duchess than Marguerite's tears, or the blood of a few French heretics. The parliament, therefore, appointed a committee of inquiry to investigate the progress of heresy in France, "instigated by a holy zeal, and a fervent abhorrence of these novelties." After receiving the report of the committee, the parliament decreed "that the Bishop of Paris, and other bishops, should be bound to grant commission to MM. Philippe Pot, president of inquiry, to André Verjus, councillor, and to MM. Guillaume Duchesne and Nicholas Leclerc, doctors of theology, to do and accomplish the trial of those who should be attainted with Luther's doctrine; that, hereafter, all who are declared Lutherans to these deputies by the bishops, or the judges of the Church, may be delivered over to the secular arm, that is to say, to the said parliament, which for the same shall condemn them to be burned alive."[2]

The king, during these proceedings, remained at Pizzighitone. The Count de Rieux had been admitted to audience by Francis. With indignation and surprise the king heard the unreasonable terms which Charles instructed his envoy to propose. "I am sorry that the emperor, your master, has given you the trouble to travel so far to propose to me articles so unreasonable,"

[1] Gailliard, Hist. de François I.
[2] MS. of the Bibl. St. Geneviève, Paris.

replied the king, coldly. "Tell the emperor that I would rather die a prisoner than agree to his demands, and dismember my kingdom; so that if he wishes to treat for peace he must accept other terms."[1] The king then wrote with his own hand the following proposals of peace, to be submitted to the emperor by the Count de Rieux:[2] He first demanded the hand of Madame Eleanor, Queen-Dowager of Portugal, a sister of the emperor. In case this alliance was conceded, the king agreed to the betrothment of Eleanor's daughter, the infanta Maria, to the dauphin. The king offered to receive the province of Burgundy from the emperor as a dowry bestowed by him upon his sister Eleanor; and to render the duchy hereditary to any children which might be born from his union with the Spanish princess. Francis agreed also to pay the large debt owing by the emperor to the King of England, to give a ransom for his own release from captivity equal to that paid by his ancestor King John to Edward III., and to furnish the emperor with troops and a fleet whenever he went to Italy to receive the imperial crown from the pope. He also declared himself willing to cede his claim to the Duchy of Milan, Genoa, and Tournay, and to wave his right to the suzerainty of Flanders and Artois.

It has been averred by almost every historian without exception that Francis offered at this period to bestow upon the Duke de Bourbon the hand of his bright and loving sister, and, with Marguerite, all the constable's princely but forfeited domains. The words used by the king respecting Bourbon are these: "That he would cause restitution to be made to the Duke de Bourbon of his offices, pension, and domains, as before possessed by him; that he would give him in marriage *a daughter of a King of France* with a dowry, as it has been the custom to give with a daughter of France."[3] It is impossible that the king could allude to his sister in these words; Marguerite was not the daughter of a King of France, but of

[1] Mém. de Du Bellay.

[2] The Count de Rieux, Antoine de Croy, was the inveterate enemy of France. He often boasted that he never felt satisfied with his thoughts but when they tended to the harm and detriment of the French.

[3] Les articles d'un Traité de Paix proposés par le Roi étant prisonnier à Pizzighitone et portés à l'empereur par M. de Rieux. Docum. sur la Cap. de François I., No. 69, publiés d'après les MSS. de la Bibliothèque Royale, par M. A. Champollion Figeac, par ordre du Roi.

Charles, Count d'Angoulême. It is evident, therefore, that Francis offered to bestow upon Bourbon the hand of the Princess Renée of France, daughter of Louis XII., a lady whom the constable, before his disgrace, had eagerly demanded permission to espouse. If there needed further proof that Francis never so far degraded his royal dignity as to offer his sister in marriage to a rebel and traitor like Bourbon, it is found in the fact that at this very time the regent was attempting to negotiate an alliance between her daughter and the Emperor Charles V., and likewise one between Madame Renée and the constable.[1]

Elated by his good fortune, and believing that it needed but perseverance to insure the acceptance of his own arbitrary terms, the emperor committed the mistake of rejecting these proposals which Francis tendered in perfect good faith. The conditions to be imposed on the captive monarch, nevertheless, continued to be warmly debated in the Spanish cabinet. Cautious and calculating, and without a ray of compassion kindled in his soul for the misfortunes of his noble rival, the emperor permitted his ministers to debate the matter; while, in concert with the Viceroy of Naples, a man crafty as himself, he made his determined resolves.

The emperor's letters to the regent and to the captive king continued to be filled with deceitful promises, and with protestations of sympathy and friendship. "The peace that I desire to negotiate is one universal and durable, redounding to

[1] The replies to all the other articles demanded by the emperor for Bourbon through De Rieux, were given thus by Francis in his own handwriting under each, appended to the original document: —

"Monseigneur de Bourbon, and his accomplices, condemned for high treason, shall be reinstated in their confiscated estates." The king responded: "Easy of accomplishment, the other points being settled."

"The process instituted by Madame shall be suspended during the life of the said Duke de Bourbon." To this article Francis replied: "Easy of accomplishment."

"Permission shall be given to the said duke to pursue his claim to Provence against the king." Francis wrote: "Agreed."

"The Duke de Bourbon shall be hereafter exempt from feudal and personal services to the King of France, and permission shall be given him to remain in the service of the emperor. Nevertheless, the said king shall not for this deem himself at liberty to harbour any subject of the emperor without his previous permission and assent." To this cool proposal Francis contemptuously replied: "Agreed, provided the Duke de Bourbon never presumes to show himself in France."

the honour of God and the welfare of Christendom; one in which I shall maintain my own honour without trampling upon yours; preserve my friends and allies, and deliver you," were the plausible words which Charles addressed to his captive in an autograph letter to the king at Pizzighitone.[1] The regent, though she continued with equal dissimulation to treat with Charles on very humble terms, was industriously intriguing to create a diversion in her son's favour throughout Europe. Relieved from the constant check imposed on her measures at the commencement of her regency by the factious parliament, which, in its zeal for the suppression of heresy, ceased to watch her movements, Louisa wielded with unscrupulous adroitness every weapon of diplomacy to attain this object. Already the greatness of Charles's success and his influence over the councils of Europe aroused deadly jealousies in the hearts of its various sovereigns. The mighty empire of France prostrate at his feet; his hereditary and elective kingdoms humble and obedient, — what would there be to preponderate against the emperor's almost universal dominion, if he were permitted to crush his most potent rival? In the exultation of his fortune, some slight degree of arrogance and dictation escaped the wily Charles in his correspondence with his ally, Henry VIII. of England, and that monarch's prime minister, Wolsey. Passionate and susceptible, Henry's indignation blazed forth; and from thenceforth he cooled in his ardour for the Imperial cause. As a signal proof of his displeasure, the King of England refused to allow his fleet, which he had assembled at Dover, to set sail for the invasion of France; as, in case the English landed in Normandy, in accordance with Henry's treaty with the emperor, a simultaneous attack was to have been made on the southern provinces of the kingdom by Bourbon and Pescara.[2]

Informed of King Henry's displeasure, the politic regent despatched a secret emissary to Dover, a Genoese gentleman, one Gioacchino Passano, to remonstrate with the king, and to represent the calamities of France. So thrilling were Louisa's representations, and subtle her insinuations respecting the secret designs of the emperor, that Henry's wrath again rose, and

[1] Lettre de l'empereur au roi de France, Bibl. Roy., MSS. de Colbert, vol. 71–2; quoted also by Capefigue.

[2] Mém. de Du Bellay.

with vehement anger he declared that he would not suffer the dismemberment of France, even to purchase the liberty of the king. At this critical juncture, the emperor, confident in his own resources, omitted to propitiate the friendship of Wolsey. He suddenly changed the familiar style of his epistles to the cardinal; instead of writing as before to him with his own hand, he employed a secretary, and substituted the Imperial signature of "Charles," for the condescending "*votre fils et cousin*," which he had hitherto subscribed himself.

Having thus wounded the vanity of the minister, Charles added next a personal insult to the sovereign, by demanding a release from the clause of the treaty of Windsor by which he bound himself to marry Henry's daughter, the princess Mary; in order that he might be at liberty to espouse the wealthy and beautiful infanta, Isabella of Portugal. Henry acquiesced; but forthwith dismissed his fleet, and concluded a defensive alliance with the regent, and engaged to aid her with men and money to repel any attempted invasion of France.

These differences, and Louisa's skilful diplomacy, having alienated from the emperor his most potent ally, the Duchess d'Angoulême next turned her attention to Italy. The pope, propitiated by the measures of severity adopted in France against heresy, and distrustful of the emperor's disinterested professions of restoring the independence of the several Italian States, lent a willing ear to the overtures of Louisa's envoy. Meanwhile, dissension reached its height between the Imperial generals, De Lannoy, Bourbon, and Pescara. In the fidelity of the viceroy, and in that of his lieutenant, Alarçon, the emperor placed his confidence. The victory of Pavia, which seemed to place Charles above the dread of faction, had, in reality — by acting on the fears of the Italian princes — diminished his influence, when all lay nominally at his feet. The pope, the Venetian republic, the Florentines, and all who had shown themselves lukewarm allies of the emperor, dreaded the effects of his resentment and tyranny, now that there was no opposing power in Italy beneath which, in case of necessity, they might shelter themselves. Francis might have largely availed himself of this favourable state of public opinion, had he not committed the fatal mistake on the field of Pavia, of surrendering his sword to De Lannoy, and thus becoming the prisoner of the emperor, instead of yield-

ing himself to the Marquis de Pescara, general of the Italian League.

The viceroy, whose craft and pusillanimity rendered him contemptible in the eyes of his brave colleagues, Bourbon and Pescara, felt the grave responsibility of such a position of affairs. The Italian States might rise for the deliverance of the king, or Bourbon and Pescara be won by the flattering promises of Francis, and their admiration of his heroic fortitude. Even the abject Duke of Milan, Sforza, in whose name the emperor ostensibly had made the conquest of the duchy, possessed power to snatch the royal captive from the victor's hands. Nearly all the Imperial troops, moreover were concentrated in the duchy of Milan, and as closely surrounded the castle of Pizzighitone as if the place were in a state of siege; the generals of the League, discontented and hostile, had it, therefore, in their power to raise Italy for the rescue of Francis. The regent Louisa continued also to negotiate with an ability quickened by her intense mother's-love. Her emissaries were everywhere; her political intrigues with the princes of Italy daily came to light. Promises, money, blandishments, and dignities, the mother of the king liberally lavished to achieve her end. Louisa's outward attitude remained yet humble and conciliating; but her purpose was unwavering. Her intrigues and secret negotiations kept the viceroy in a fever of excitement and apprehension; and fears that Madame should successfully stir up the Italian princes to revolt form the burden of De Lannoy's communications to his Imperial master at this season.

The king, during this interval, grew daily more and more weary and impatient of his prison. He urgently entreated his mother to take the conduct of the negotiation for his release into her own hands; or if affairs detained her in France, to send his sister Marguerite to meet the Imperial deputies at any place mutually agreed upon. "I beg you to believe, Madame, that God has sent this infliction upon me for my good; and I beseech you to come without delay, for never have I felt more weariness and desire to see you, than at this hour does your humble and very obedient son, Françoys,"[1] was the entreaty of the king to his mother. He also besought her to appoint ambassadors, and

[1] MS. Bibl. Roy., F. de Béthune, MS. 8506, fol. 1.

to cause deputies to be nominated by the parliament, to proceed to Toledo to discuss and examine the conditions of peace offered by the emperor. Francis, however, pertinaciously retained the idea that the personal negotiation of Madame, or of his sister Marguerite, would alone be attended with success. The Duchess d'Alençon hailed a project which would render her instrumental in effecting the deliverance of her brother, and constantly dwelt upon the theme in her letters to Francis.

In accordance with the desire of her son, Madame proposed to meet the emperor at Narbonne, there to negotiate the king's release on the basis of a triple marriage, — that of Francis with the Queen of Portugal, of Marguerite with the emperor, and of Bourbon with the Princess Renée of France. Not even an allusion remains to indicate how Marguerite approved of the scheme; which, had it been attended with success, would have elevated her to share Charles's imperial throne. Before her union with the Duke d'Alençon, her marriage with the emperor, when Charles was as yet only sovereign of the Low Countries, had been projected, and relinquished principally on account of the discountenance of Queen Anne de Bretagne, who wished him to espouse one of her own daughters. The emperor at this period, however, if not actually betrothed, had plighted his faith to the infanta Isabel of Portugal, — a princess possessed of a large dowry, and eminently beautiful in person. The gentlest trait in Charles's character is the devotion he always manifested towards Isabel, whom he loved with extraordinary constancy. Madame's overtures, therefore, were not received by the emperor with the alacrity they merited; and, under the circumstances, it is probable that Marguerite beheld with displeasure and repugnance the commencement of such a negotiation. The obstacles opposing themselves to the union of Francis with Queen Eleanor were not of so insuperable a nature; as, although betrothed by the inexorable will of her brother to the Duke de Bourbon, the dislike of Eleanor to contract this alliance was notorious.

The regent commenced her negotiation through the Sieur de Lignand, son-in-law of an influential member of the Imperial cabinet, whose signature, however, to the letter he was commissioned to write to Louisa in reply is not to be deciphered. The emperor, as will be seen on perusal of the following curious letter, declined to negotiate any treaty in which these marriages formed a basis : —

Lettre de . . . à Madame la Regente.[1]

Madame, — Through the Sieur de Lignand, my son-in-law, I received the letters which it has pleased you to write; and I have heard from him the courteous words which it pleased you to address to him concerning the peace, declaring to him your great and earnest desire that there might be concord and firm alliance between our two great and virtuous princes; and that to achieve this, the king, your son desired to take the queen, sister of the emperor, in marriage, and at the same time to betroth the dauphin to Madame, the emperor's niece, daughter of the said queen his sister, all which seemed to you a happy means of accomplishing this pacification: added to which, he informed me of the discourse which you were pleased to hold to him respecting Madame la Duchesse d'Alençon, your daughter, saying that you would be very happy should she be found acceptable and agreeable to his imperial Majesty.

As respects M. de Bourbon, you said there would be found plenty of marriages quite good enough for him in France, naming Madame Renée, with whom, you observed, he might well content himself. And, moreover, it appeared to you that a portion of what his imperial Majesty demanded from the king your son ought to be remitted in favour of these marriages of his sister and of his said niece, and even the duchy of Burgundy, which in default of children from these said marriages should be restored to his Majesty and his heirs; and that this done, the said king your son would always remain the emperor's good brother and true friend, and would aid and assist him in all his undertakings, either personally or at the head of a great army, with many other notable offers made by you. Moreover, that if it pleased his imperial Majesty to advance to the confines of the county of Perpignan you, Madame, would without delay journey to Narbonne; and that if it was the emperor's good pleasure to send me to treat of this said peace and alliance with you, you would greatly approve of it.

Madame, I cannot thank you humbly enough for the esteem and confidence you have displayed towards me: and I wish with all my heart that God would give me grace to minister to and achieve so holy a work. Certes, I would spare neither labour nor trouble to accomplish it, considering the good that will result, not only for the service of God, but for the welfare of Christendom. I assure you, Madame, that if I could have before descried a way to negotiate this peace, as it seems now likely to be done, I should with all my heart have sooner set about it; for the emperor, my sovereign lord, has

[1] Docum. sur la Cap. de François I., No. 71.

been always inclined thereto, and I have never found him averse to reasonable proposals, from the intense dislike which he has to shed Christian blood and his desire to employ his forces against the infidels for the exaltation of our holy Catholic faith. But to speak sincerely and frankly to you, Madame, as it pleases you to put confidence in me, you must if you desire to achieve this said peace, and before assembly be made for any conference, put four principal articles completely out of your mind: —

First, the marriage with the sister of the emperor, which you hope to conclude for the king your son; there is no appearance or chance of your success, on account of the promises made to Monseigneur de Bourbon, in which his Majesty would not fail for any consideration in the world, in order not to lose the good renown which he has acquired of always faithfully keeping his promise.

The second point is, the Duchy of Burgundy and the other lands appertaining to the inheritance of the late monseigneur, Duke Charles of Burgundy. You must not imagine that the emperor will ever consent to relinquish his rights thereto in favour of sister or niece whatever; and never will there be peace until restitution has been made, — the duchy being his true patrimony, the cradle of the emperor's house and arms, and from whence sprung his Order of the Golden Fleece; therefore his Majesty will never leave his quarrel, but will exact restitution by every means in his power.

The third point is, the aid and assistance offered to the emperor by the king against the Venetians and other potentates of Italy, the which his Majesty does not desire, it being his intention not to enter into a fresh war excepting against the infidels, or for the recovery of his just rights.

The fourth point is, that his Majesty does not intend to make any treaty whatever without the consent and contentment of his friends and allies, the King of England, the Duke de Bourbon, and others; designing, as it has been before stated, that this peace should become universal throughout Christendom.

Madame, you will be pleased to notify to me your pleasure on the above, that I may forthwith employ myself according to my duty, and the desire I have to promote a solid peace, God helping me; whom I pray, Madame, in commending myself to your good grace, to give you a long and happy life.

From Toledo, this second day of June, 1525.

Your humble servant, ————.

This document is the only one in which Marguerite's marriage with the Emperor Charles V. is mentioned. The idea of such

an alliance does not appear to have been further pursued, as in none of the subsequent negotiations for the king's release is it referred to. Neither did the proposed conferences at Narbonne take place, for the very palpable reason that if Madame "put the four principal articles proposed completely out of her mind," as she was required to do, there was not the slightest need of negotiation in any way, for the emperor had always professed his willingness on those conditions to restore the king to liberty. The only course left for the regent, therefore, was to treat for the liberation of her son through ambassadors commissioned to negotiate the peace at the court of Toledo. She accordingly accredited thither François de Tournon, Archbishop of Embrun. The archbishop's instructions were drawn with extreme caution; and he was directed to reject nothing proposed to him without previous reference to the council of regency. Subsequently, three more personages were added to the embassy, — the first president of the parliament of Paris, Jean de Selve, Gabriel de Grammont, Bishop of Tarbes, and the treasurer, Babou de la Bourdazière; all men of consummate address, cool, self-possessed, and admirably adapted to cope with the shifting tactics of the Imperial cabinet.

The position of the viceroy in Italy, nevertheless, became daily more untenable. Bourbon and Pescara conceived a deadly jealousy of his favour with the emperor, who listened to his counsels to the exclusion of every other. The army, clamorous for pillage or for the settlement of the arrears of pay owing, was almost in revolt. All things hung in suspense; and had the banner of the *fleur-de-lis* been then unfurled at the head of the army by Bourbon, the troops at his bidding would unhesitatingly have marched upon Pizzighitone, and have proclaimed Francis King of Naples and Duke of Milan.

The viceroy carefully watched the movements of Bourbon; he saw him powerfully moved by the clemency of his injured sovereign. French at heart, Bourbon hated the emperor; and excepting for the advantages which it brought him, loathed his intended alliance with the melancholy Eleanor. On some pretext the Duke de Bourbon about this time contrived another interview with the king at Pizzighitone. Its object was evidently political, and one by which Bourbon hoped to obtain remission by present service from the penalties incurred by his treason.

The king immediately despatched a messenger with a report in cipher of this conference to his mother. Madame comments upon the intelligence in her reply, thus: "Monseigneur, I see by the letter that it has pleased you to write to me, the offers of service made to you by Monseigneur de Bourbon, which give me great content; as it is impossible for me to have a greater pleasure than to see him return to his duty towards you."[1] The nature of these offers made by Bourbon to the king have never been precisely ascertained, and they still remain the theme of much historical speculation. There is little doubt, however, that the possibility of negotiating a separate and secret treaty with Francis, which should restore him to his former lofty position in France, long agitated the mind of Bourbon. The seal and guarantee of this treaty was to be the hand of the Duchess d'Alençon, whom Bourbon ever regarded with admiration, though not to the romantic extent usually ascribed to him; besides, the constable, doubtless, thought that no safer hostage than Marguerite could he demand from the king, to insure his future position and good treatment at court. A revolution, however, in favour of Francis, accomplished by the sole agency of the constable, would have placed Bourbon at the mercy of his sovereign after his return to France; once there, the king might bestow upon him the hand of his sister, or ridicule the credulity which believed that treason such as his could be pardoned. Bourbon's distrust of the regent, and his experience of her implacable animosity, appear to have arrested his measures at this juncture. It was in his power at this period, by affording his sovereign a brilliant and glorious revenge over his rival the emperor, partly to wash away the stain of his treason; but the constable's hatred of the king's mother again prevailed to his ruin. He deliberated; the opportunity and power to work this mighty revolution passed away and never occurred again.

Reduced to extremities by the peril of his position, the viceroy took advantage of Bourbon's inactivity and indecision to extort large sums from the various Italian States for the payment of his mutinous troops, under the deceitful plea of raising a loan for the emperor's service, which none of the princes dare refuse to lend. These supplies quelled insubordination amongst the

1. Docum. sur la Cap. de François I., No. 81.

troops, and renewed for a short season their enthusiasm for the Imperial cause. De Lannoy, meanwhile, perceiving the impatience of the king at the slow progress of the negotiations for his release, artfully threw the blame on the lukewarm zeal and unskilfulness of the French envoys at the court of Toledo; and declared that a personal conference of two hours between the emperor and the king would avail more than any embassy which the regent could send. To the surprise and delight of the viceroy, Francis displayed no aversion to be removed into Spain to confer personally with the emperor; and even declared his willingness to concert measures to that end. Two great objections to this course, nevertheless, presented themselves to the mind of the cautious De Lannoy; he knew that neither Bourbon nor Pescara would willingly permit the king to be removed from Italy; it was therefore necessary to elude their vigilance, and to hide the contemplated measure from the army. The other obstacle, one which at first seemed insurmountable to the viceroy, was the presence of a powerful French fleet in the Mediterranean, which probably might intercept and capture the Spanish squadron with the king on board.

The feverish irritation of Francis at his captivity overpowered every politic and prudential resolve; and with impetuous haste he lent himself to the designs of his wily foe, and consented to aid in deceiving those in whose friendship lay his surest resource. He agreed to disarm his fleet, and consented to furnish seven French vessels for his transport into Spain. These galleys were to be manned by Spaniards, and surrounded by a guard of sixteen imperial vessels; the whole squadron to be under the command of the viceroy.[1] The more effectually to blind the king, the viceroy pretended to be conferring a favour upon Francis by undertaking the difficult task of deceiving the army, and of imposing upon the credulity of its two redoubtable chiefs, Bourbon and Pescara. At the king's desire, Montmorency was forthwith despatched into France, bearing the express orders of his master to the regent for the disarming of the French fleet, and the immediate advance of seven vessels of war from Marseilles to Toulon, and thence to Genoa.

Profound must have been the consternation of the politic

[1] Mezeray; Gailliard; Du Bellay.

regent when Montmorency explained her son's imprudent determination. Had Louisa then chosen to exercise the prerogatives intrusted to her, she could at once have given a decided refusal to disarm the fleet. In this instance, she appears, however, to have considered herself bound to render prompt obedience to the express mandate of the king, without even availing herself of the liberty of remonstrance. The duchess, therefore, despite the opposition of part of the Council, issued commands in obedience to the king's will. She intrusted the execution of this measure to Montmorency, who accordingly proceeded to Marseilles, and called into harbour the fleet cruising in the Mediterranean, dismissed the crews of the various vessels of war, and taking possession of seven galleys, sailed with them to Toulon.

The sanguine predictions of her beloved brother could not inspire Marguerite with confidence in the measure which he had so precipitately adopted. The emperor's dissimulation filled her with distrust. If Charles persisted in his demands while his rival remained in Italy, where so many chances and unexpected combinations might restore him to liberty, what treatment might not the king expect when a prisoner in Spain, cut off from every chance of liberty, save in Charles's own clemency? Marguerite had many misgivings; and vainly, in the last letter which she wrote to the king before his removal from Pizzighitone, she strove to conceal her forebodings, while she prepared him by her affectionate exhortations to submissive resignation, in case, as she feared, the craftiness of the viceroy had so wrought upon the magnanimity of her brother as to induce him by a voluntary act to render his captivity still more hopeless. Marguerite's impressive words, written when her own heart was wrung with grief, must have fallen with melancholy and prophetic power on the susceptible spirit of Francis. With earnest eloquence, the duchess implores her brother to submit patiently to his wearisome captivity; while she touchingly alludes to her own friendless position during his absence. Marguerite wrote thus: —

LETTER OF THE DUCHESS D'ALENÇON TO KING FRANCIS I., AT PIZZIGHITONE.

MONSEIGNEUR, — The farther you depart from us, the greater will become my firm hope of your speedy deliverance and return; for

the time of man's greatest weakness and prostration is the hour when God most mightily manifests His power, in order that all may ascribe solely to Him honour and glory. Our trust remains unshaken in His mercy and power; for does He not give us signal proof of His care by inspiring Madame with such wisdom for the rescue of yourself, and the preservation of the kingdom? Not that human power, prudence, or toil can effect this great thing. God, our universal and sovereign Father, can alone accomplish it, — He who loves you far better than we can do. But if it should please God to give you experience of the bitter sorrows which He suffered for you, and at the same time mercifully to endow you with grace to support patiently His dispensations, I entreat you to believe, monseigneur, that it is but for the trial of your faith, and to afford you leisure to meditate upon, and to be convinced of the depth of His love towards you. He can content himself only with your undivided heart — even as in love He has given you all His own — in order that being united to Christ in tribulation, He may deliver you for His own glory, and your consolation, by the merits of His victorious and blessed resurrection; that, by your means His great name may be known and adored, not only in your own kingdom, but throughout Christendom, even to the conversion of unbelievers. Oh, thrice happy, sire, will be your brief captivity, if through it God deigns to deliver so many precious souls from the prisons of infidelity and eternal damnation! Alas, monseigneur, I am aware that you comprehend these truths better than I can do; but in all things I think of you as the only friend whom God has left me in the world, — to be at once a father, a brother, and a husband; and not being able to say all this in person, I have not feared to write this long letter, which seems short to me, so great a joy is it to feel that I am speaking to you.

Before I conclude, I must add that Madame remains still in this place (the Celestine convent at Lyons) in perfect health. She has quite recovered from her slight attack of gout, and walks frequently in the garden, in order to preserve that health so precious to you. She incessantly applies herself to the hastening of those affairs we so ardently desire to conclude, to obtain which we daily and fervently supplicate the Heavenly King, whose hand alone can restore you to freedom. I pray you to believe, monseigneur, if God is pleased to grant our prayers, many lives would be heartily given to purchase your deliverance. Above all, she who would thereby be too great a gainer would joyfully sacrifice her existence, who is

Your very humble and very obedient subject and sister,

MARGUERITE.[1]

[1] MS. Bibl. Roy, Suppl. Fr., No. 2722.

When the king received his sister's letter his journey into Spain was decided upon. With consummate skill the viceroy managed to deceive his colleagues, Bourbon and Pescara. He summoned a council of war at Milan: with plausible address he narrated the intrigues of the French government, and declared that the hostile disposition of the States contiguous to the Milanese no longer rendered it possible to detain the king at Pizzighitone. This announcement was received in stern and ominous silence. De Lannoy, perceiving that the chiefs suspected his true designs, and that the mention of his project of conveying the king to Spain would be met with defiance and rebellion, dexterously concluded his oration by proposing that Francis, escorted by the entire army, should be removed from the duchy of Milan, to one of the emperor's impregnable fortresses in the kingdom of Naples. Diverted from their suspicions by this proposal, the chiefs of the League assented: for the fact was not to be disputed that, so far from being detained in safe captivity, a popular commotion even, or a broil amongst the soldiery at Pizzighitone, might restore the king to liberty. De Lannoy had then the address to extort consent from Bourbon and Pescara that the king's journey to Naples should be made by sea, as the transfer of their royal prisoner, through so many States inimical to the imperial cause, might, he pretended, be accompanied with serious difficulties.[1]

Escorted, therefore, by the viceroy, by Bourbon, Pescara, Alarçon, and almost the entire confederate army, the king commenced his journey from Pizzighitone to Genoa, where Montmorency, with the French vessels, was to meet him. By order of the regent, Montmorency required a second express commandment under the king's sign manual, before he delivered the French galleys which he left at Toulon, to the viceroy. Distrustful of the king's sincerity, De Lannoy, fearing that some plot lay hidden beneath the marshal's scruples, embarked with his prisoner on board the imperial vessels, and made sail towards Naples. The despair of Francis was overwhelming.[2] Judging Charles by his own chivalrous spirit, he doubted not that a frank disclosure of their mutual differences would result in reconciliation, and the union of their joint forces against the

[1] Mezeray, Mém. de Martin du Bellay.

[2] Lettre de M. de la Barre à la Duchesse d'Angoulême.

Turks, whose expulsion from Europe continued to be demanded by the pope.

For two days the viceroy made straight for Naples to sound the king's real intentions, and to deceive the chiefs of the League, who were to march there at the head of their forces after seeing the king embark, ready to receive their royal captive on his arrival. At Porto Venero, however, the imperial squadron was joined by Montmorency,[1] with seven French vessels of war. De Lannoy then ceased to dissimulate. So long as he held the captive king, he cared not that Bourbon and Pescara were marching on their bootless errand, flattering themselves that they had seen Francis embark and the squadron sail for Naples. The viceroy therefore made directly for the Spanish coast; and after a short but prosperous voyage, landed his royal prisoner at Barcelona;[2] whence, after a few hours' repose, they again re-embarked for Valencia. Again fortune favoured Francis, and afforded him, even when standing on Spanish ground, a chance of escape, of which a prince of less chivalrous honour would have availed himself. On landing at Valencia, a mutiny broke out amongst the soldiers who had accompanied the viceroy. They insisted on receiving their arrears of pay; and assembling in arms before the house where the viceroy and his prisoner lodged, they imperatively demanded to speak with the former. De Lannoy presented himself on the balcony; but was assailed with execrations, and so furious a discharge of musketry that he was compelled to retreat, and make his escape over the roofs of the houses along the street until he reached a place of safety,[3] The king, meantime, was exposed to great danger; a shower of balls entered his apartment, and fell around him; and several even struck a marble pillar against which he stood. Informed of the undignified retreat of the viceroy, Francis presented himself on the balcony, to harangue the soldiery. Instead, then, of bribing them to favour his own retreat on board the French vessels, still at anchor in the bay, which he might easily have done, Francis, disdaining so unknightly an evasion of his plighted word, exhorted the soldiers to return to their duty, and

[1] Lettre de M. de la Barre à la Duchesse d'Angoulême.

[2] Docum. sur la Cap. de François I., No. 96. The king arrived at Barcelona about the 22d of June.

[3] Mém. de Du Bellay.

caused money to be distributed amongst them, promising in the emperor's name that their demands should speedily be satisfied to the full. The majesty of the king's deportment, and the affability of his words and manner, acted with magical effect on the soldiery. Every arquebuse was grounded, his royal word accepted, and, amidst a storm of acclamations, the multitude dispersed.[1]

The tumult thus appeased, the viceroy retired with his royal captive to the fortress of Valencia, excusing himself to the king for not immediately proceeding to Madrid or Toledo, on account of the impossibility of levying a sufficient number of horses for the soldiers forming his escort. While at Valencia, the king received the following cold greeting from the emperor, in whose generosity he had so fearlessly confided: —

FROM THE EMPEROR CHARLES V. TO KING FRANCIS I.

It has given me great pleasure to learn your arrival here,[2] — a circumstance which, without doubt, will tend to hasten a solid and general pacification to the great benefit of Christendom, which is a thing to be desired by us above all others. I have sent commands to my viceroy to repair immediately to my presence, that from him I may learn your intentions on this matter. I have also desired him to continue towards you the courteous treatment which you have received; for I should be grieved, if hitherto you have found yourself well entertained in Italy, that you should not meet with still better treatment here, that you may know and appreciate the great desire which I have to remain your brother and friend,

CHARLES.[3]

[1] Mém. de Du Bellay. [2] In Spain.
[3] Bibl. Roy., MSS. de Colbert, vol. 71-72.

CHAPTER X.

WHILE Francis I. was pining in his distant prison, France, divided between endless factions, agreed only in an ardent desire to procure the release of the king, and for the power of avenging upon the Emperor Charles V. the national humiliation inflicted by the defeat of Pavia. A dismal gloom encompassed both the court and the people; the reverses and calamities of the country engendered bitterness and suspicion. A spirit of defiance and independence animated all; a salutary fear of the laws no longer checked the evil and angry passions pervading all ranks of society. Public and domestic discord predominated throughout the land. Authority, however legitimate, was questioned; and the king's absence appeared to loosen every private as well as legal restraint. The regent was feared and hated; but such was the known character of Madame that, although the parliament rebelled and harassed her regency by acts of insolent insubordination, the Chambers dare not pass a certain point in their resistance to her commands. The chancellor, the regent's principal adviser, was execrated, and universally reviled; yet his enterprising genius, and utter recklessness of means to accomplish his designs, created a salutary dread in the minds of his enemies, — a feeling none knew better how to avail himself of than Duprat.

Yet, had the animosity of the people and the parliament been solely expended on the regent, or on her minister and government, it is to be doubted whether Louisa, with all her talent and firmness, would have been able to control the opposition of the hostile party until the return of her son from captivity.

To obviate these difficulties, the regent perceived but one expedient, which she had adopted with unscrupulous decision; hence her concession, despite her daughter's tears, to the hatred diffused throughout the land against the so-called heretics.

While the parliament persecuted, burned, and proscribed, the duchess negotiated with foreign powers; and by her skilful diplomacy finally raised up Europe in arms against the conqueror of Pavia. Nor did Louisa forget to use the no less potent resource of personal conciliation; her court at Lyons was thronged by persons representing every shade of the endless political and theological opinions agitating the country. In the presence of the dignified and politic regent, asperities vanished; and but one spirit, that of loyal devotion to the cause of the king, appeared to animate the courtiers. Marguerite, likewise, admirably seconded her mother's efforts: her gentleness, grace, and affability won the hearts of the most turbulent. "She marvellously assisted her mother, Madame la régente, to rule the kingdom, to hold the nobles in check, and to content the princes of the realm," says Brantôme.[1] Yet Marguerite dared not exercise her power to befriend the reformers. Duprat's implacable counsels closed her mother's heart to the promptings of pity. It was for the interests of her son, he represented, that her government should remain free and unfettered; how, then, could the blood of a few obscure French theologians be put in competition with a benefit of such public magnitude? Francis, moreover, was beginning to show signs of impatience at his sister's indefatigable solicitations in favour of men whom he regarded as enthusiasts, and whose attempts to sow troubles during his absence had been insidiously represented to him.

Aware of the confidence reposed in her by the reformed party throughout the kingdom, Marguerite, fearful lest their teachers might rashly incur perils relying on a protection it was now no longer in her power to confer, caused it to be intimated through her chaplain, Michel d'Arande, that as she could write no more to the king in their favour, they must carefully avoid running into unnecessary dangers. This message from the king's sister, when most the reformed party needed her succour, was received with disappointment and dismay. Yet their confidence in Marguerite was not destroyed: her courage they confidently predicted would rise again with the urgency of their peril. Far, therefore, from resenting her words, they believed them to be only prompted by her concern for their safety. "God gives her

[1] Brantôme, Dames Illustres, Vie de Marguerite de Valois ou d'Orléans.

grace," wrote Toussaint to Farel, "to say and to write only what is necessary for poor souls." [1]

But a grievous trial awaited Marguerite, — one which overwhelmed her with anguish, and afforded scandal and astonishment throughout the kingdom. This was the indictment of the Bishop of Meaux before the Commission of Inquiry established by the parliament in obedience to the pope's brief. Béda had not forgotten the peremptory manner in which the former process against the bishop had been suppressed through the influence of the Duchess d'Alençon. Next to Marguerite herself, the most illustrious and powerful adherent of the new doctrines in France was Briçonnet; the Sorbonne therefore argued that no surer means existed of striking terror throughout France, than the arraignment of the Bishop of Meaux upon the deadly charge of heresy. Preliminary measures were swiftly concerted between Béda, Duchesne, and André Verjus, one of the most intolerant members of the newly constituted commission. It was resolved to resume the trial of the bishop on the same charges as had been before preferred; for it does not appear that Briçonnet had subsequently introduced innovations into his diocese. Jean Brochart, an eloquent and learned advocate, was therefore instructed by the university to impeach the Bishop of Meaux before the assembled chambers.[2] The parliament thereupon issued an edict, dated October 3, 1525, commanding that the bishop should be privately interrogated by Maîtres Jacques Menager and André Verjus, "touching the things whereof he was accused by the Sorbonne." [3]

In consternation indescribable the Bishop of Meaux watched the rising of the storm about to overwhelm him. The powers of the terrible Inquisition, which commenced by compelling him, one of the highest prelates of the realm, to submit to the interrogatory of two inferior officers of the parliament, could consign him, without appeal, to torment or to the stake. Filled with dismay, the bishop vainly looked to the court for support and protection. The regent and the chancellor replied to his urgent remonstrances by exhorting him to renounce heresy and the companionship of heretical teachers. Marguerite, his good and

[1] MSS. de Neufchâtel.
[2] Crévier, Hist. de l'Université.
[3] Gailliard, Hist. de François I.

noble patroness, listened in silent sorrow, knowing that only because she stood under the shadow of her brother's sceptre was she herself saved from like persecution.

As a last resource, Briçonnet demanded to be heard before the assembled chambers of parliament, — a privilege his undoubted right, both as Bishop of Meaux and Count de Montbrun. His request was peremptorily refused;[1] but a short delay was granted him to prepare for his interrogatory before the commissioners.

Briçonnet's condemnation was certain. If he presented himself before the commission, he must resolve either to seal with blood his testimony to the truths of the gospel, or, by shameful recantation, belie all that he had ever written or taught. The most torturing indecision shook his mind; doubts, where all before had been steadfast, now, in the face of danger, broke upon him. His timid nature shrunk from the encounter of popular execration in defence of his faith, — a faith to be finally vindicated by the pangs of martyrdom. Briçonnet hoped that gradually the gospel light would penetrate and illumine the most remote corners of the kingdom; his desire tended towards a reform in the Church as it was then constituted, not for its total severance from the Roman system. Essentially aristocratic in feeling and sympathy, the Bishop of Meaux leaned towards the maintenance of the splendours and prerogatives of the hierarchy; and he beheld with displeasure the self-constituted ministers of the reformed churches exercising the sacred offices of the priesthood, regardless of episcopal sanction. A community thus constituted was not Briçonnet's ideal of a Christian church, or such as his writings develop, when stripped of that superabundance of metaphor which so disguises his true sentiments. A gradual assimilation of the Romish Church to the purity of the primitive ages of Christianity was the secret but impossible aim of the Bishop of Meaux. But his irrevocable decision had now to be made. In the one scale were temporal honours, episcopal dignity, and princely rank; in the other, degradation, and the dread doom which the Romish Church awarded to the contemners of her doctrine and infallibility. Every advantage was taken of the bishop's wavering spirit; for his recantation promised greater triumph to the Sorbonne than his martyrdom. Great stress was purposely laid on those points

[1] Gailliard; Duplessis, Hist. de l'Eglise de Meaux.

of the reformed doctrines most forcibly assailing his aristocratic prejudices: the enormities of the insurgent Lutheran peasants of Alsatia were quoted as a fair sample of the havoc which their superiors would make of the temporalities of the Church.

Martial Mazurier was the organ employed by the university to ply Briçonnet with plausible argument. Unhappily, the vague mysticism in religion in which the Bishop of Meaux indulged had confused and weakened the acuteness of his judgment on matters connected with the faith. The same kind of mental bewilderment which in several of his letters to the Duchess d'Alençon compelled him to pause in the midst of some intricate theological dissertation, and after a vain search to discover the thread of his argument, exclaim, "*Madame, qu'est-ce que je dy?*" or "*Madame, je ne sçay que je dy,*" doubtless contributed to Mazurier's triumph, and to Briçonnet's ultimate fall. It was, moreover, one of the principles of the mystic school to submit to the existing church, whatever it might be, and to seek to inculcate its tenets rather by hidden effort than by open force.

Briçonnet's recantation, therefore, was at length wrung from him: for the sake of form, it was however decreed by the Sorbonne that the bishop must submit to the interrogatory of Maîtres André Verjus, and Jacques Menager, who forthwith declared that he had cleared himself of the heinous charge of heresy.[1] A public penance, nevertheless, was imposed upon him; and on his return to Meaux, Briçonnet assembled a diocesan synod, in which he condemned Luther's doctrines, and retracted all that he had said derogatory to the Roman worship and formularies. As a pledge of his reconciliation to the See of Rome, the bishop decreed a solemn fast on the Eve of Corpus Christi, and himself took part in the gorgeous procession with which the festival was celebrated. The bishop was, moreover, mulcted in a nominal fine of two hundred livres, by order of the parliament, to be expended in defraying the costs of the public prosecutions instituted against his late heretical *protégés.*

Having succeeded in extorting these unworthy concessions, the Sorbonne, satisfied with rendering the bishop an object of pity and contempt, suffered him to retire without further moles-

[1] Mezeray, Abrég. Chron.; Gailliard, Hist. de François I.

tation to his diocese. The remaining few years of Briçonnet's life [1] were spent in obscurity and in repentance. Ever an object of suspicion and distrust to the court of Rome, his life was harassed by the galling *espionage* of subordinates, and by vain attempts on his own part to clear himself, by acts of unnecessary zeal, from a distrust which dishonoured him in the eyes of that world he had sacrificed peace of conscience to propitiate.

Briçonnet's fall awoke sad forebodings in the minds of Marguerite and her friends. The cause of reform had received a serious check by his apostasy; and its enemies imbibed fresh courage to persevere with unflinching steadiness in their zeal to eradicate what they termed heresy from the kingdom. A new decree of the parliament authorized the arrest of all the doctors of the Sorbonne within the realm, who had formerly found refuge under Briçonnet's patronage at Meaux. Jacques Pavannes was burned at Paris, in the Place de Grève; Schuch suffered martyrdom at Nancy, and Leclerc at Metz. The fires of persecution blazed throughout the kingdom.[2] Louis de Berquin, denounced again before the Sorbonne by the Bishop of Amiens, was thrown into prison, and condemned to the stake.[3] The hope of the dismayed and persecuted reformers centred in the Duchess d'Alençon. With tears and supplications they prayed her interposition to modify, at any rate, the rigorous decree of the parliament and the Council; they conjured her to do so by her love and reverence for that Holy Word in defence of which they were ready, if need be, to lay down their lives. The friends of Berquin also entreated the duchess to snatch him a second time from the fury of his enemies.

In utter consternation at the calamities which had befallen her friends, and grieving over Briçonnet's culpable concessions, Marguerite dared promise nothing. Her fear of doing that which might perplex the schemes of the regent, and retard the restoration of her brother to his people, held her back. In vain she had made it her personal request to Louisa and her minister, that mercy might be shown to the reformed teachers, if only on the plea that the most learned men in France ranked

[1] Briçonnet died in 1533, and was succeeded in the see of Meaux by Jean du Tillet, brother of the registrar-general of the parliament.

[2] Duplessis, Hist. de l'Egl. de Meaux; Mezeray.

[3] Gailliard, Hist. de François I.

amongst their numbers. With her filial tenderness for the Duchess d'Angoulême, and her veneration for the talents she displayed, Marguerite naturally recoiled from obtaining from the affection of the king that boon which her mother refused her. The duchess doubted, likewise, whether the king would interpose at her request, and reverse the decisions of the regent, whose diplomacy had already won the admiration of Europe. It was a season of great trial to Marguerite. The terrible executions continued in various parts of the country, and filled her with anguish and affright. At length, indignation gave her courage. Her heroic spirit forbade her to desert those who relied on her protection, and whose opinions she shared; and she resolved, at the cost of any personal disquiet and sorrow, to appeal again in their behalf to her brother.

The letter which Marguerite addressed to the king in his lonely Spanish prison unfortunately exists not; but her pleadings moved the compassion of Francis. His immediate response justified his sister's trustful confidence. The missive was addressed to the parliament; and the king again commanded the liberation of his gentleman of the chamber, Louis de Berquin.[1] This mandate was moreover accompanied by stringent directions to the regent to intimate officially to the parliament that it was the pleasure of the king that all processes pending against heretics[2] should be suspended until after his return. Francis also forbade that any more executions for heresy should take place within the realm until the decrees were confirmed by himself.

From the alacrity with which the Duchess d'Angoulême undertook the commission, and the inflexibility of her enforcement of it, it must be presumed that she was not averse to merciful measures, provided her own orthodoxy was not questioned, or her clemency made the means of raising up opponents to her government. Probably she may have secretly joined with Marguerite in arresting the sanguinary zeal of the Sorbonne; which, without damage to her popularity, she thus did on the

[1] Hist. de Paris; Régistres du Parlem. The king's command was not literally obeyed, for Berquin was detained in prison until after the return of Francis.

[2] "Ces hommes d'excellent savoir" as the reformers were termed in the royal missive.

very express commands of the king. At any rate, Marguerite's interference did not diminish her influence with her mother, — a circumstance which would have assuredly occurred, had the imperious Louisa been thwarted in her designs upon so grave a subject, even by her daughter.

The indignation of the parliament was extreme. It instantly despatched a deputation of members to remonstrate with the regent; and to promise that if, despite her son's commands, she would still authorize the sittings of the Chamber of Inquisition, the parliament would willingly incur the blame and responsibility of such an act.[1] The Duchess d'Angoulême, however, courteously replied that the king's express will must be obeyed, both by herself and by the parliament; and she decidedly refused to permit the assembling of the commissioners. As some indemnity for the disappointment, the parliament received a brief from Pope Clement VII., eulogizing the exemplary zeal of the chambers for the extirpation of heresy.[2]

Lefèvre, meantime, safely escaped to Strasbourg, and took up his abode in the house of the reformer Capito, where, likewise, Farel and Roussel had found refuge. With these devoted men Lefèvre diligently attended the ministrations of Capito and Bucer. They frequently held assemblies of the reformed teachers congregated in Strasbourg, to confer on the best and most successful way of promoting the Reformation throughout France. This important commission was confided to Lefèvre by the Duchess d'Alençon,[3] who commanded him to take minutes of the conferences, in order that they might afterwards be faithfully reported to herself. In these meetings Marguerite's name was uttered with the fondest veneration. The fearless elevation of her character, its humility and tenderness of spirit, were proudly dwelt upon; and seldom did this little band of Christian men separate without imploring that the blessing of God might rest upon the efforts of the "illustrissimæ Ducis Alançoniæ," — the expression by which the reformed ministers invariably mention her in their correspondence.

The executions for heresy being stayed throughout the land, owing to the exertions of the Duchess d'Alençon, and as all

[1] Gailliard, Hist. de François I. [2] Ibid.

[3] Melch. Adam, Vita Capitonis; Dictionnaire Hist. de Bayle, Article, Lefèvre.

fresh processes were strictly forbidden by the regent, the parliament solaced itself by carrying on, with renewed vigour, the trial of the abettors and sharers in the treason and evasion of the Constable de Bourbon, which had been pending throughout the captivity of the king. Every evening the Chancellor Duprat craved audience of the regent to report the proceedings of the Chambers, and to seek the duchess's sanction for its decrees. But ever wary and cautious, Louisa permitted the execution of very few of the sentences pronounced by the parliament; and suspended the rest until the return of her son.

This much desired event, however, seemed distant as when the intelligence of the disastrous day of Pavia first filled France with terror. The emperor firmly refused to admit Francis into his presence until conditions, such as he had caused to be presented at Pizzighitone, should be agreed to by his captive. Bitterly deceived, Francis had now leisure to repent his precipitate determination to place himself so unreservedly in the power of his crafty rival. Ashamed to confront the king whom he had so plausibly deluded, De Lannoy obtained permission to remove Francis from Valencia to the castle of Venyssollo,[1] situated about twelve miles from that city, where he could take diversion by hunting, and enjoy daily exercise amid the beautiful scenery of the Vega. When the king appeared in public, numbers of persons, afflicted with the Evil, crowded around him, beseeching to be touched; "so that in France even was never seen a greater crowd of suppliants, for his princely bearing inspires all who behold him with affection and boldness."[2] Before the departure of the king from Valencia, the Archbishop of Embrun, the President de Selve, and the other ambassadors nominated by Madame, landed at Barcelona; and instead of proceeding direct to Toledo, repaired to confer with Francis. Leaving the king at Venyssollo, under the safe guardianship of Alarçon, the Viceroy of Naples, accompanied by the Marshal de Montmorency, set out for Toledo.

The mission intrusted to the marshal was one in which Marguerite was closely concerned; though it is more than probable that at the time of Montmorency's journey she knew not the

[1] The king quitted Valence for the castle of Venyssollo on the 29th of June.

[2] Lettre des ambassadeurs en Espagne au Parlement de Paris, Docum. sur la Cap. de François I., No. 106.

errand upon which he was bound. From the date of the proposed conferences at Perpignan, Marguerite's thoughts and wishes centred on the project of personally negotiating her brother's release. Such an achievement would be a tribute to the affection which she bore Francis, and a glorious testimony of her political ability; constantly, therefore, Marguerite urged this project both in her communications with the king and with Madame. To Francis, also, this design was no less agreeable than to his sister; he was aware how desirable, if not essentially requisite it was, to accredit an envoy at Toledo, invested with plenary powers of negotiation, whose denials and concessions should be unfailingly ratified by the regent and by her Council. The disposition displayed by the emperor to avail himself of every trifling advantage, rendered the presence of an ambassador possessing authority to decide the vexatious points perpetually raised, without reference to Madame, indispensable. The integrity, even the very existence, of France as a kingdom hung upon the tact and discretion of an envoy invested with such powers. Convinced of the absolute necessity of this important mission, the regent had long been anxiously seeking an eligible ambassador. The Duke de Vendôme, first prince of the blood, was a valiant soldier, but ignorant of the arts and subtleties of the cabinet; besides, it was dangerous and without precedent to invest a prince standing next in the line of succession with authority so ample. Policy also forbade the regent to confer a trust replete with such momentous interests on the president of the turbulent parliament of Paris, whose opposition to the government of Francis began from the first day of the king's reign. The intervention of the Duchess d'Alençon seemed providentially at hand to achieve her brother's release. Equally trusted by the king and by Madame, Marguerite laboured not under the responsibilities which must have impeded the exertions of any other ambassador; for she knew their desires and future designs as accurately almost as her own.

The mission, therefore, upon which Montmorency was despatched had for its principal object to demand a safe conduct for the journey into Spain of the king's sister, Madame Marguerite de France, Duchess d'Alençon et de Berry and Countess d'Armagnac, — as she was termed in the instructions given to the marshal; "with permission for the said duchess to be at-

tended by a train suitable to her quality and dignity. The said duchess would visit the emperor, having full and entire power to negotiate the peace; so that the emperor and his council might clearly perceive that the intentions of the king were honourable, frank, and upright."[1] The Marshal de Montmorency was likewise instructed to negotiate a truce of five months with the emperor, during which period Madame Marguerite might visit Spain; also, other matters essential to the maintenance of friendly relations with the emperor should be meanwhile discussed. The emperor at first affected to make many objections to the journey of the duchess into Spain, which would compel him to treat personally for the release of the king; and he observed that it was for the ministers of France and Spain alone to arrange the conditions of peace. Montmorency replied as he had been instructed to do, "that the king, through his sister, wished to complete within the space of a month what otherwise would be a matter of endless length, to the infinite detriment of their majesties, their subjects, and territories."[2]

The emperor, after granting audience to the marshal, assembled the Grand Council of Castile, and requested the advice of his nobles and prelates on the communication which he had received from the king, as also on the final terms to be offered him. The minutes of this important deliberation are carefully preserved amongst the archives of the crown of Spain in the castle of Simancas. The majority of the Council, influenced by the Bishop of Osma, confessor to the emperor, at first recommended the adoption of moderate demands; the which, it was wisely argued, while restoring liberty to the king, offered the surest guarantee for the execution of the treaty when Francis found himself again the free and powerful monarch. At length the Duke of Alba rose:[3] his words were listened to with eager attention, for no one exercised more influence over the mind of the young emperor. Alba possessed genius inferior to none in the Spanish Council; but it was his stern and gloomy character which especially recommended him to the favour of his imperial master. Charles loved unscrupulous men, — men

[1] Mémoire au Seigneur de Montmorency, de ce qu'il a à dire à l'empereur de la part du Roy, Docum. sur la Cap. de François I., No. 107.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Frederic Alvarez de Toledo, uncle of the renowned Ferdinand, Duke of Alba.

who by their sword, or by their subtle intellect, subdued every difficulty with firm and fearless determination, let the consequence be what it might, so that "the star of the House of Hapsburg" shone pre-eminent on the political firmament of Europe.

Aware of Charles's secret wishes, the Duke of Alba insisted on the maintenance of the terms of peace as proposed to the king at Pizzighitone. "Statesmen who understand the science of government," said Alba[1] before the Council, "seek not to establish kingdoms, states, or monarchies on civility and courteous deferences the which may be described as the holy water of courts (*que de l'eau bénite de cour*), but they render them stable by sound political maxims. The best interests of the prince ought to serve as law, and should be regarded before what is called generosity. Civility, courtesy, and generosity are good and commendable virtues for a private gentleman, or to sway society in general, but not for the exercise of a sovereign. To insure the stability of monarchies, regard must be had to the future, and to objects more real and solid. This external generosity is at best like the sun in March, which often vanishes at the moment it appears brightest. Courtiers may afford to be of opinion that the king should be restored to liberty; but not so men who govern states and empires. We ought, moreover, to take into serious consideration that the French are an inconstant nation, full of levity and faithlessness; and, consequently, unless we take prudent measures they will mock us, and call that cowardice which we term generosity." So pleaded the Duke of Alba at this important Council. The Chancellor Gattinara declared himself of the same opinion; and their sentiments were too much in accord with the secret desire of Charles not to meet with his cordial approbation. The emperor, therefore, when each member of his Privy Council had spoken, declared himself to be of the opinion of Alba and his chancellor. The matter of the truce of five months, demanded by Francis, and the safe conduct for the Duchess d'Alençon, were then discussed. It was unanimously agreed to grant the desired armistice; to have refused it, or the safe conduct requested for Marguerite, would have been to give the lie to the emperor's plausible manifestoes,

[1] MS. Archives Espagnoles de Simancas, No. 367, quoted by Capefigue, Hist. de François I.

in the which he professed himself longing to conclude a peace. This latter concession, however, was most reluctantly made by Charles and his Council; they had formed and made known their inexorable resolves respecting the treaty, and being determined to maintain every iota of their demands, Marguerite's personal negotiation became only a needless source of embarrassment. The Viceroy of Naples, the Count de Rieux, and the chancellor, were despatched by Charles to make known to Montmorency his compliance with the demands of the king.

It was, however, added that in case Marguerite availed herself of the safe conduct it had been agreed to despatch to her on the application of the regent, it was the will of the emperor — who regarded the duchess as accredited to himself — that whatever might be the powers confided to her, Madame should still authorize her ambassadors to treat for peace with the imperial ministers; though the treaty was to be finally concluded between Charles and the Duchess d'Alençon.[1] This stipulation portrays the tenor of the emperor's diplomacy, when brought into personal relations with the duchess on her arrival in Spain. All disagreeable acts of arbitrary dictation were on every occasion allotted to the Privy Council; the emperor never suffered the equanimity of his temper, nor the bland courtesy of his deportment to be disturbed. The Marshal de Montmorency replied to the communication made to him, "that Madame la duchesse would come to Spain furnished with powers so ample that she could authorize the ambassadors to continue their negotiations with the Imperial Council."[2] It was moreover agreed that Brion was to be despatched without delay by Madame to Toledo, in order to obtain the emperor's final ratifications to the truce, which was to extend to the last day of January, 1526; and that awaiting Marguerite's arrival, the French ambassadors should carry on the negotiations for the release of Francis, and debate on the various points connected with the treaty.

Meanwhile no intelligence reached the parliament of the arrival of the ambassadors in Spain; and for many days also Madame had been without news of her son. Rumours of disastrous import began to be circulated in Paris; it was reported

[1] Rapport de ce qui a été négocié auprès de l'empereur, par M. de Montmorency, Docum. sur la Cap. de François I., No. 1, No. 108. [2] Ibid.

that the king was ill, and even his decease was positively announced, on the authority of private intelligence from Spain. Excitement and suspense rose high: Madame became alarmed; and the ill-concealed distress of the Duchess d'Alençon was commented upon amongst the courtiers. All the avenues from France into Spain were strictly guarded, and none but couriers provided with safe conducts from the Imperial Council were admitted beyond the frontier. In this emergency, Guillaume du Bellay, Sieur de Langey, offered his services to the regent, to penetrate into Spain and ascertain the true condition and prospects of his royal master. His proposal was gladly accepted by Madame. Of all the nobles of the court, Langey was the one best fitted for this perilous undertaking; his accurate knowledge of that country, and of the mountain passes of the Pyrenees, and the facility with which he spoke the Spanish language, inspired sanguine hopes of his success. Du Bellay, therefore, quitted Lyons privately and in disguise: by circuitous routes, and by narrow mountain gorges unknown to the vigilant soldiery of the Catholic king, he made his way to Valencia, and returned in safety to Lyons after the expiration of some ten days.[1] The anxiety of the regent and Marguerite during this interval, however, had been relieved by the arrival of the Marshal de Montmorency, with the joyful news of the emperor's willingness to grant the armistice and to forward a safe conduct for the Duchess d'Alençon to visit her brother.

The king, meantime, remained at Venyssollo under the guard of Alarçon, and though courteously entertained, for a captive, still he found his prison rigorous enough. "The person of the French king is in the keeping of the Captain Alarçon," writes the Bishop of London, the ambassador of Henry VIII., to the Cardinal Wolsey,[2] "which so narrowly seeth him, that no word escapes him, nor is spoken to him unmarked; nor no man without the emperor's knowledge speaketh with him, nor otherwise than openly. And we understand by the emperor's Council, that until the emperor and he shall be in a point on this treaty, the emperor will not speak to him, nor shall he come nigh the court." The king's hours of retirement were invaded by the officious surveillance of Alarçon; and when Francis took exer-

[1] Mém. de Du Bellay.

[2] MSS. Cotton, Vesp. c. iii. p. 95.

cise abroad, he was mounted on a mule and surrounded by an armed escort, commanded never to break its ranks.

Anxious to obtain the ratification of the truce, Madame despatched Brion to the emperor with full powers to conclude it on her behalf. He was to travel to Toledo visiting Venyssollo on his way; as Louisa took the opportunity of sending money to the king, besides presents of rich furs,[1] and other articles.

Europe, meantime, beheld with compassion and indignation the emperor's ungenerous treatment of his rival. Henry VIII. now openly avowed his sympathies with the captive monarch; and grew more cordial in his correspondence with the Duchess d'Angoulême. In Italy, Bourbon and Pescara threatened to snatch the sovereignty of that fair and hotly contested land from the emperor; so incensed were they at the fraud practised upon them by De Lannoy. When the certainty of the landing of Francis in Spain was known, menaces of direful import escaped the lips of the Marquis of Pescara, whose sway over the army was all but omnipotent, as at once to revive hope in the breast of the minor sovereigns of Italy, intimidated by Charles's overwhelming success. The marquis forthwith addressed a letter to the emperor, complaining of the deceitful conduct of the viceroy. He vehemently accused him of treachery and cowardice. "If that coward had been obeyed," wrote Pescara, "we should have lost the Milanese by a shameful flight towards Naples, upon the very first move made by the Duke of Albany. At the battle of Pavia he knew neither how to command nor how to fight; he had neither head nor heart, and did nothing but exclaim, with a terror which rendered him contemptible in the sight of the meanest of our soldiers: '*Ah! nous sommes perdus!*' If he dares to deny these facts, I will maintain them against him at the sword's point!"[2] Such was the invective that reached the emperor, aimed at his favoured and trusted De Lannoy. But if the valiant Marquis de Pescara served him well with his sword, the duplicity in which the viceroy excelled answered Charles's designs still better. In the emperor's estimation, a man who had had art to dupe, not only his renowned and vigilant generals Pescara and Bourbon, but

[1] Mém. de Du Bellay.

[2] Brantôme, Vie des Capitaines Illustres, Article, Charles de Lannoy.

the King of France, the Duchess d'Angoulême, and her council of regency, deserved to be treated with incomparably greater distinction than a soldier who prized his honour above his master's interests. Charles therefore despatched a complimentary rejoinder to Pescara's angry appeal; but he retained the viceroy at his court, and all but publicly ascribed to him the sole honours of the victory at Pavia.[1] The Duke de Bourbon, however, was the person most aggrieved by the unceremonious transfer of the king to Spain. While Francis remained a captive at Pizzighitone, Bourbon was in a position to dictate terms: his situation was now reversed; and in the guise of a suppliant he found himself compelled to solicit the emperor's favour. Then was it that the great constable tasted the bitterness of the degraded and false position in which his headstrong passion had placed him: a pensioner on the bounty of Charles, despised by the Spanish nobility,[2] and execrated by his countrymen, Bourbon felt that the revenge prepared against his sovereign had recoiled upon himself.

While the honours of the victory of Pavia were thus jealously disputed by the imperial generals, the selfish designs of the emperor met with no response in Europe. Both friend and foe equally deprecated Charles's ungenerous requital of the chivalrous faith reposed in him by the king; who, although he had only consented to his journey into Spain on the express understanding that it was for the purpose of treating personally with the emperor, was yet detained a captive at Venyssollo. The learned men of Europe, whose munificent patron Francis had been, united in eloquent protests against the tyranny of the emperor, and the advantage which he sought to take over his fallen foe. The noblest of these protests was that put forth by the pen of Erasmus, who, though himself a subject of the emperor, yet had courage to censure Charles's illiberality. "If I were the emperor," wrote Erasmus,[3] "I should say to the King of France: 'My brother! some evil fate has provoked us to war. Fortune has made you my prisoner; but that which has happened to you might also have occurred to me. Your misfortunes make

[1] Brantôme, Vie des Capitaines Illustres, Article, Charles de Lannoy.

[2] The Spanish courtiers bestowed upon Bourbon the epithet of "El Traidor de su rey."

[3] Erasmus, Dialog.

me feel the woes inherent to mankind. We have been too long at war together; let us now combat after another fashion: I restore you to liberty — in return, grant me your friendship; let us forget the past! I ask you not for ransom: let us live as good neighbours; and be it from henceforth our ambition which of us two shall most distinguish himself for sincerity and benevolence. Whichever of us obtains this victory will enjoy the most noble of triumphs. My clemency will confer greater honour upon me than if I had conquered France; and your gratitude will be more glorious to you than if you had driven me from Italy.' Oh, how so sublime an action would render the emperor forever illustrious! — and what nation would not joyfully submit to the rule of such a prince!"

The noble words of Erasmus failed to move the sympathy of the emperor, or that of his confidential advisers, the viceroy, the Duke of Alba, and Gattinara. The opportunity of holding the King of France a prisoner probably would never occur again; therefore, now was the time — as the viceroy hinted in his letter to the emperor written after the battle of Pavia — to make profitable use of that great event. The ambassadors, meanwhile, deputed by Madame to negotiate until the arrival of the Duchess d'Alençon in Spain, entered Toledo. They were received with the greatest honours by the emperor, who despatched the captains of his guard to meet and escort them from Saragossa; but as the ambassadors were instructed first to proceed to Venyssollo and confer with Francis, this courteous attention was of no avail, as they embarked again at Barcelona for Valencia and travelled from thence to Toledo. The President de Selve and his colleagues arrived in that city on Saturday the 16th day of July. The emperor deputed a bishop and a count, whose names are not on record, to meet the ambassadors, and to escort them into Toledo as far as the house of the Archdeacon of Vesuz, where lodgings had been assigned them.[1] In the course of the same day the President de Selve received a communication from the emperor, to the effect that he would grant the ambassadors audience before hearing mass on the following Monday. Accordingly, at the hour appointed, Charles sent the same bishop and the count, who had received the ambassadors on their first arrival, attended by a

[1] Lettre de MM. d'Embrun et de Selve, à Madame la Régente, Docum. sur la Cap. de François I., No. 118.

great train of chamberlains and gentlemen to conduct them into his presence. Their reception at the imperial palace was magnificent and imposing: the emperor's body-guard lined the courts, vestibules, and galleries of the palace; and the principal personages and officers of the Spanish court were in attendance, either around the person of the emperor or at their respective posts. The President de Selve and the Archbishop of Embrun advanced, and after profoundly saluting the emperor, presented him with their credentials from Madame. Charles took the letters: after perusing them attentively, he inquired after the health of the Duchess d'Angoulême, and where she was sojourning. The president replied, "that, thanks be to God, Madame was in perfect health, and had just quitted Lyons to advance nearer to the theatre of negotiation."[1] Charles presently caused all his courtiers to withdraw from the apartment, excepting the viceroy, the Count de Nassau, Don Ugo de Monçada, the Chancellor Gattinara, the Count de Rieux, and several other important members of the Spanish Privy Council. The President de Selve then commenced an oration which lasted nearly an hour and a half, the space during which the emperor granted the ambassadors, to use their own words, "good and courteous audience." Charles's patience and self-command must have been considerable, as he listened to the harangue of the president, interspersed as it was by traits of heavy erudition, and by historical allusions so foreign, at first sight, from the subject of the negotiation, as to require singular ingenuity to detect the deductions intended. The president opened his oration by comparing the blessings of peace with the miseries of war; and from thence he proceeded to show that, as the emperor was the prince who possessed the largest territorial sway since the days of Charlemagne, he ought to perform an act of clemency and magnanimity towards the king; and the more imperatively so, as Madame was cousin-german to Madame Marie de Bourgogne, his grandmother, in whose right Charles claimed Burgundy. The president next carefully recited the genealogical descent of Madame, to prove the parentage he claimed for her: he then quoted several examples of princes who had displayed notable clemency towards their fallen enemies, from the Holy Scriptures, and the histories of Greece and Rome.

[1] Lettre de MM. d'Embrun et de Selve, à Madame la Régente, Docum. sur la Cap. de François I., No. 118.

He represented to his imperial hearer the miserable condition of Poland, and of the kingdom of Hungary, desolated and invaded by Turks and infidels, and the anarchy that pervaded Germany, "which country had risen to arms in defence of the Lutheran sect, and of those who wished to live in full liberty to do evil, and to withdraw themselves from obedience to the Holy Apostolic See, the prelates of the Church, and the Holy Empire." The president then went on to instance the mode of procedure usually adopted by the ancient kings of Egypt under circumstances parallel to those in which the emperor now found himself; and ended his harangue by an allusion to the message sent through the prophet Isaiah to King Cyrus, — to wit, that God had conferred kingdoms upon Cyrus that he might deliver the people of God from captivity, and rebuild again the temple at Jerusalem; by the which De Selve intended to infer that Charles ought to consider himself indirectly, though emphatically, commissioned to drive the infidel Turks from Europe and Palestine.[1]

When the president concluded, the emperor replied, "that he had listened attentively to all that had been said; and, for his part, though he was not able to quote so many learned histories and good examples as had been put forth to him, yet he had always desired peace, and that it was to his great regret when war broke out between himself and the king. During the progress of the war, as now, when God had given him victory, he still desired universal peace, which the French should always find him ready to promote."[2] The ambassadors then inquired whether the emperor was willing to treat for the ransom of the king in money, or whether he was resolved to insist upon the terms proposed at Pizzighitone, making such modifications as should render their acceptance possible, as, awaiting the arrival of Madame la Duchess d'Alençon, who would come with full power over all, they had authority to treat; but that the surest way to arrive at peace was, in their opinion, to conclude forthwith an alliance between the two princes. The emperor replied "that he would not accept a ransom for the king; and that with respect to the alliances proposed, he wished them to be as close as his honour permitted. As regarded the settlement of the territorial claims preferred by him, he would nominate members of his council to

[1] Lettre de MM. d'Embrun et de Selve, à Madame la Régente, Docum. sur la Cap. de François I., No. 118. [2] Ibid.

argue the matter with the ambassadors."[1] Charles then withdrew, leaving the president and his colleagues dubious as to the effects of their appeal.

The afternoon of the same day the ambassadors were favoured with a private audience of the Chancellor Gattinari, and in the evening they waited upon the Queen of Portugal to present her with letters from Madame. This interview afforded an opportunity not to be resisted by the indefatigable president for the delivery of another erudite address. He first presented the letter intrusted to him, which Eleanor graciously received and perused in the presence of the ambassadors. "Afterwards we told her that the king, and you, Madame, had commanded us to present your very cordial remembrances; and that we had it in charge from you both to thank her for the good-will she displayed for the deliverance of the king, and the promotion of peace," writes the verbose but very matter-of-fact president to the regent, when detailing this interview. "We then, on our own behalf, supplicated that she would be pleased to continue these good offices until affairs came to a happy conclusion; in doing which she would perform a laudable work, honourable to herself and necessary to the two said princes. We then proved to her, at length, the proximity of lineage between yourself, Madame, and her grandmother, Madame Marie; and cited the example of Queen Clotilde, daughter of a king of Burgundy, who introduced Christianity into the royal house of France; and thereby showed that if she became the means of delivering the king from captivity, she would also be loved and revered above all other ladies who might ever come into France."[2] Eleanor listened with great suavity to the awkward attempt of the learned president to woo her favour for his royal master, and courteously invited the ambassadors to sit by her side. She then replied, "that it was with very good will and heartiness that she employed herself to promote peace and the liberation of the king." "We continued then, Madame, in further courteous discourse, but did not allude more especially to her marriage with the king, because all who were present in the apartment with her Majesty gathered round us to listen to what passed," adds the discreet president.[3]

[1] Lettre de MM. d'Embrun et de Selve, à Madame la Régente, Docum. sur la Cap. de François I., No. 118. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid.

Madame placed great hope in the intervention of Queen Eleanor to promote the liberation of Francis. During the king's detention at Pizzighitone, Louisa wrote to the queen to request her to use her influence with the emperor to moderate the rigorous terms proposed by De Rieux. The queen's prompt and cordial reply greatly comforted the regent, who therein saw a confirmation of what had been reported to her of Eleanor's dislike to the union proposed for her with the Duke de Bourbon. The Queen of Portugal then occupied the first place at the court of Spain; she was two years older than her brother, and her character partook of the sedate self-possession which distinguished that of Charles. Though the emperor professed great attachment for his sister, her influence was little felt in politics; and from Eleanor, as from all the members of his imperial house, Charles exacted the utmost deference and submission. Once this authority had been heavily and painfully submitted to by Eleanor; for her imperial brother had decreed her marriage with Emmanuel, King of Portugal, to put an end to an engagement subsisting between herself and Prince Frederic, brother of the elector palatine. At that period Eleanor had just completed her eighteenth year; and not only did she return Prince Frederic's attachment, but she maintained a clandestine correspondence with him at her brother's court. Charles had not then ascended the imperial throne, but notwithstanding his youth, his *surveillance* over his sister appears to have been rigid and arbitrary. Incensed beyond measure at Frederic's presumption in aspiring to espouse Eleanor, Charles, by the advice of his preceptor Chièvres, determined quietly to frustrate the design, but yet to make the offender conscious of the indignation he had provoked. He accordingly surrounded his sister with persons commissioned to keep strict watch, and to bring him a daily report of her actions. One day Charles was apprised that a letter from the prince had been conveyed to Eleanor. Without loss of time he repaired to his sister's apartments, and presenting himself unannounced, found Eleanor, as he expected, deeply engaged in the perusal of the letter just delivered to her. Eleanor coloured deeply when she beheld her brother, and attempted to conceal the letter by thrusting it into the folds of her bodice. This action did not escape the eyes of the wary Charles. Seating himself by his sister, he entered into conver-

sation with her; then taking his opportunity when Eleanor's attention was diverted from her fear of betraying her lover, he dexterously drew the letter from its hiding-place, perused it, and quitted the apartment without uttering a syllable.

Eleanor and her lover were not, however, kept long in suspense as to Charles's sentiments; the following day Prince Frederic received a peremptory dismissal from court, and Eleanor was offered the alternative of a convent or the hand of Emmanuel the Great, King of Portugal, — a prince thirty-one years her senior, the widower, also, of her two aunts, Isabel and Maria, daughters of Ferdinand and Isabel the Catholic. Excepting this last objection, Emmanuel was worthy of an alliance with Eleanor. He was a great and magnificent prince, and his reign is distinguished in the annals of his country as the Golden Age of Portugal. Eleanor, nevertheless, was a very reluctant bride; she became a queen in 1519, and at the age of twenty-one quitted her brother to preside over one of the most splendid courts in Europe. Emmanuel died in 1521, leaving Eleanor richly dowered, and the mother of one child, the infanta Maria, whom Charles was so anxious to affiance to the dauphin.

But short as was Eleanor's regal sway, the ambition of her race had been roused, and the sceptre which it cost her so many tears to accept she deeply regretted when about to resign. Before she quitted Portugal the prince palatine was again at her feet; for now, as queen-dowager and a widow, Eleanor was nominally emancipated from the authority of her brother. The royal widow listened haughtily to Frederic's protestations of undiminished attachment, and coldly replying "that a queen could only descend from her throne to ascend another," peremptorily as the emperor could desire repelled his suit. Eleanor then retired into Spain, and lived in stately seclusion at her brother's court, where next to her younger sister Mary, Queen of Hungary, she perhaps possessed the greatest influence.[1]

The emperor appointed Thursday, July 20, for the first conference between the French ambassadors and his Privy Council. It was holden at the imperial palace between the hours of eight and eleven in the morning, the debate being resumed again in the afternoon. The ministers present were the Chancellor Gattinara,

[1] Dreux de Radier, Anecdotes des Reines et Régentes de France.

the Viceroy of Naples, the Count de Rieux, the Count de Nassau, and Lalemant, Charles's confidential secretary. The conference opened by a statement made by Gattinara, of the claims of the emperor on the duchy of Burgundy. The chancellor's statement was to this effect: that Robert II., Duke of Burgundy had one son, Eudes, and one daughter, Jane, married to Philip de Valois, King of France. The posterity of Eudes, son and heir of Duke Robert II., became extinct with his grandson, Philip II., Duke of Burgundy, when the duchy was seized by King John of France, in right of his mother, Jane of Burgundy, eldest daughter and consequently heiress of Duke Robert II., on the decease of her nephew. The duchy, the chancellor proceeded to prove, was then granted in all perpetuity, and not as an appanage, by King John to his fourth son, Philip the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, and to his heirs and descendants, male and female, without bar of inheritance whatever. Having thus proved that Burgundy was not subject to the Salique law, Gattinara claimed it for the emperor as the heir of his grandmother, Mary, Duchess of Burgundy, lineal representative of Philip the Bold, and fourth in descent from that prince; from which said Duchess Mary, the province had been unjustly usurped by Louis XI., and since retained by the crown of France.[1]

The President de Selve replied by denying the inferences alleged by the chancellor. He stated that long before the ancestors of Robert II. possessed the duchy of Burgundy it was a fief of the crown of France, and therefore subject to the Salique laws, and had been granted as such to Robert I., son of King Robert of France: that although to do honour to the memory of his cousin, Philip II., Duke of Burgundy, King John consented to accept the duchy as that prince's heir, yet his rights to Burgundy, as an escheat to the crown on the extinction of the male issue of Robert I., was no less recognized and apparent. The question, however, was put out of all doubt, he averred, by the act of King John, who before he granted the duchy to his fourth son, solemnly and with all ceremonies and oaths, incorporated it a fief of the crown, incapable like the other royal domains of alienation or of falling *en quenouille*. The president therefore declared that on the decease of Charles

[1] Conférences de Tolède, Docum. sur la Cap. de François I., No. 122.

le Teméraire, last duke of the second house of Burgundy, without heirs male, the duchy naturally reverted to the crown of France; as Mary, that prince's only daughter and the emperor's grandmother, was incapable of succeeding to it, or of conveying any right thereto to her posterity.[1] The chancellor replied by declaring the statement made by the president erroneous and untenable; and proceeded to reassert his own views of the matter, which again met with vehement contradiction from the French ambassadors. This sharp skirmishing between the President de Selve and Gattinara continued for some time; each party pouncing upon the errors of genealogy which in the heat of the argument the other occasionally committed. At length one of Charles's commissioners, who bears the magnificent title of "grand commandeur-major," interposed with the sage observation "that, although without doubt disputants must be allowed the privilege of argument, it was well known that Monsieur le grand chancelier and the president were persons of such vast erudition that the one could never convince the other he was in the wrong; yet it would be more advantageous to lay aside these quarrels and devise probable means for negotiating a peace so necessary to both princes."[2] The debate was therefore resumed upon points bearing more directly on the king's liberation; the imperial councillors pertinaciously insisting on their master's rights to Burgundy; and the French as indefatigably proving the inalienable nature of fiefs appertaining to the crown of France. At length the good-humour of the imperial ministers completely deserted them, and the Viceroy of Naples exclaimed irritably "that it was useless to debate with the Sieur d'Embrun and the first president; for as they assert that the king can alienate nothing from his kingdom, the emperor must right himself by other means."[3] The meeting then broke up; the ambassadors returning to their lodging, while the viceroy and his colleagues proceeded to inform the emperor of the result of the conference.

It was not until Monday, July 24, that the ambassadors were again summoned before the Council; it was then told them by the chancellor that the emperor would by no means moderate his just demands; therefore, as the king had no power to

[1] Conférences de Tolède, Docum. sur la Cap. de François I., No 122.
[2] Ibid. [3] Ibid.

alienate any territory from the French crown, it was his opinion that the coming of Madame la Duchesse d'Alençon would be rather frustraneous than otherwise, and of no profit to the king her brother."[1] The Archbishop of Embrun hastily replied "that, whatever might be said, he for his part saw that the presence of Madame la Duchesse d'Alençon was more necessary than ever, in order that she might give satisfactory replies to the emperor's demands, the which surpassed their powers to do."[2]

The ministers of France and Spain met several times more to debate these points, which neither parties had the will nor the power to yield; and once, in the presence of Charles himself, when it was again explicitly stated why the emperor refused to permit his claims to be laid before the parliament of Paris. The final conclusion of the conferences was, that a summary of the arguments and protests of the French ambassadors should be presented to the emperor; and that nothing more could be done until after the arrival of Madame la Duchesse.

The truce, meantime, received the emperor's ratification,[3] and Charles wrote letters full of gracious and conciliatory import to his royal captive by M. de Brion, who proceeded from Toledo to Venyssollo. He also granted Francis his desire of approaching the imperial court without delay; and as an earnest of his sincerity, the emperor despatched his officers and purveyors to arrange the king's journey to Madrid, and promised to send the viceroy to escort him thither on the termination of the conferences of Toledo. "The Commander de Figueroa arrived here yesterday,"[4] wrote Brion on his arrival at Venyssollo to Madame, "with orders to conduct the king near to the emperor, to a town called Madrid, about twelve leagues from Toledo; and you must not, Madame, make any difficulty in believing that the emperor will see the king before the arrival of Madame your daughter there, where I hope she will find all things well prepared. Madame, although you are in France, and the king in Spain, your opinions and desires are similar; for after I had told him those things which you commanded me

[1] Conférences de Tolède, Docum. sur la Cap. de François I., No. 122.
[2] Ibid.
[3] The truce was finally ratified about the 14th of August, 1525.
[4] July 19, 1525.

to do, he replied that he had sent you like instructions by M. le Maréchal de Montmorency; and you cannot imagine his delight when I related to him what you ordered me to do. Madame, the king desires that of all his Council, not one person is to be suffered to accompany Madame your daughter, except those whose names he has commanded me to transmit to her, which I am to send by this courier to-day."[1]

The project of her journey into Spain was hailed with delight by Marguerite; not so was it, however, by Madame. The thought of this second separation wrung tears from the stern spirit of the Duchess d'Angoulême, and for long she refused to sanction her daughter's expedition. What if Marguerite should be doomed by the faithless emperor to share her brother's captivity? Would the King of France, the emperor's ministers might argue, think the cession of Burgundy too precious a price to pay for the ransom of his loved sister? Could Madame maintain her inflexible bearing when her two children, both Francis and Marguerite, languished in prison? Duprat, meanwhile, used his almost boundless influence over Madame to reconcile her to this step. He represented that Marguerite's talents and address, united to the influence her beauty was sure to exercise over the proud Castilian hidalgos, would produce more effect, in a very brief period, than the solemn negotiations of the first president. The duchess would likewise possess the advantage of personal access to the emperor, whenever she pleased to demand it; while the reputation she had acquired would doubtless indirectly influence his decision on the points submitted by her to him. Louisa listened in silence. Her sagacity penetrated the emperor's character, and rendered her less sanguine than Duprat; but she ceased to offer further opposition to the departure of her daughter. A courier was therefore despatched into Spain to demand a safe conduct, in the name of the regent, for the approaching journey of the Duchess d'Alençon, to the court of the emperor. "Monseigneur," wrote Marguerite to her impatient brother, in the fervour of her delight that Madame's consent to her journey had been obtained,[2] "according as it pleased you to send me word by the Maréchal de Montmorency, Ma-

[1] Lettre de M. de Brion à Madame, Docum. sur la Cap. de François I., No. 120.

[2] MS. Supp. F. Bibl. Roy., No. 2722.

dame has, at length, granted me leave to make the journey into Spain; to accomplish which I am making all speed, as the marshal will report to you; feeling only too thankful, if God, through my humble means, wills to give you deliverance. But, monseigneur, the way is long, and you know the amount of fatigue my strength will endure. Fearing, therefore, that I cannot be with you as soon as I desire, I humbly beseech you to command your ambassadors to act so that I may know at once on my arrival how your affairs stand; and do not delay them in anything waiting for my presence. As Madame cannot give you the consolation of seeing her, she has been pleased to permit me the happiness of serving you. I will not attempt to describe how agreeable to me is obedience to your united will."

The delay the duchess dreaded was that which she anticipated from the opposition of the Spanish cabinet in granting the safe conduct so necessary for her safety. It was with undisguised repugnance that Charles received the application made by Madame; and it proved the occasion of another stormy scene in the Council. Every trifling obstacle was discussed with wearisome detail, for the express purpose, as it seemed, of frustrating Marguerite's project. The French ambassadors, indignant at the hostility displayed by the imperial ministers, urgently pressed Charles to grant the safe conduct without delay, according to his promise. "Your Majesty," said the first president to the emperor, "one hour's conference between yourself, the king my master, and Madame d'Alençon, will do more to forward the treaty than a month's discussion with jurisconsults."[1]

During these negotiations Marguerite continued to make preparations for her departure. Tidings of her brother's indisposition increased her anxiety to set out; for disappointment, *ennui*, and vexation at the coldness of the emperor, and the obstacles raised to impede his sister's journey, brought on an attack of low fever, and so great a depression of spirits as seriously to alarm the devoted servants of the king who shared his captivity. With or without the emperor's permission, Marguerite now resolved to soothe, or to share her brother's prison.

France enthusiastically applauded her design. Marguerite's

[1] Garnier, Hist. de France.

courage and known talents excited sanguine expectation. The courtiers contended with each other for the privilege of accompanying her into Spain. "Monseigneur," writes the duchess to the king, in reply to letters brought from Spain by Montpezat,[1] "I beseech, if God in his mercy enables me to see you, that you will deign to send me especial word which persons I shall bring in my suite; for all your good servants here are so desirous to see you that each entreats me to take him, as Montpezat will tell you more fully, if it pleases you to hear him." Marguerite then proceeds to inform her brother of the slight indisposition of Madame, occasioned by over-anxiety, "but," says she, "her delight in the hope of soon seeing you at liberty has vanquished her pain, so that the gout has disappeared, and there only now remains a slight swelling on the knee."

Marguerite, meanwhile, was formally invested by the regent with full and plenary powers, as ambassadress-extraordinary to the imperial court, to conclude whatever treaty she in her wisdom should deem most conducive to procure the liberty of the king, and to maintain the honour of France. The French envoys at Toledo were declared her subordinates, and instructed to conclude nothing without the previous sanction of the duchess.

Just at this season, as if affairs were not in a condition sufficiently serious and complex, the rapacity of the Cardinal Chancellor Duprat involved Madame in a serious misunderstanding with the parliament. It was a matter upon which the senators were peculiarly susceptible, reviving the old animosities respecting the rival decretals, the Pragmatic and the Concordat. On the day of the battle of Pavia, the Archbishopric of Sens became vacant, and the regent, in accordance with the articles of the Concordat, exercising the royal authority, conferred the see upon Duprat; also, the rich abbey of Saint Benoit sur Loire, which fell into the gift of the crown about the same period. The chapter of Sens, nevertheless, proceeded to the election of a new archbishop according to the provisions of the Pragmatic, and steadily declined to accept the nomination of the regent. Duprat upon this refusal caused the temporalities of the chapter to be seized; and effectually to prevent the monks of St. Benoit from

[1] MS. Bibl. Roy. F. du Suppl. Fran., No. 134.

a like act of insubordination by the election of a new abbot, he stationed a garrison of soldiers within the monastery.[1] The aggrieved parties petitioned the parliament. Duprat applied the counter movement of causing letters of evocation to be issued, transferring cognizance of the affair from the parliament to the grand Council of State, which was entirely swayed by himself. An officer sent by the parliament to Sens, to inquire into the proceedings of the chancellor, was killed by the blows which he received in attempting to obey his instructions. The parliament, irritated beyond endurance, decreed the arrest of all persons who had taken part in this act of defiance; and summoning the full Chambers, it obtained an unqualified condemnation of the chancellor's measures. The next step was to address a letter to Madame, praying her to send Duprat before the parliament, to give account of his proceedings. It was moreover decreed, in "*mente curiæ*," if this request were not complied with, on or before the 12th of November, that a citation should be issued to compel the chancellor to appear at the bar of the house. The regent refused to defer to the demand; and replied by a peremptory letter, calling upon three or four of the chief members to repair immediately to Tournon, and explain the causes moving them to issue this citation of the chancellor. The parliament then somewhat hastily instructed the Attorney-general Lizet, to draw up articles against Duprat, to be preferred in case he neglected to obey the citation before the 12th of November. Lizet sought in vain to excuse himself from a task so onerous and embarrassing, especially as Madame expressly forbade him to take part in the proceedings against Duprat, to whom, moreover, he was indebted for many benefits. His scruples, however, were overruled by a command of the Chambers, directing Lizet to fulfil the duties of his office, or to resign it. The Chambers, nevertheless, deputed two members to wait upon the regent; but their remonstrances were so badly received that the parliament in high displeasure peremptorily recalled them.[2]

The unpopularity of the chancellor was now merged in the feeling of positive hatred felt for him by all classes, except by those who wished to exalt still more the almost despotic power of the crown. All kinds of songs and pasquinades, stigmatizing

[1] Gailliard, Hist. de François I.

[2] Régistres du parlement, Docum. sur. la Cap. de François I., No. 128.

his avarice, oppression, and morals, received boundless patronage. His late aggression on the powers of the parliament, and his unscrupulous appropriation of the ecclesiastical benefices bestowed upon him by Madame, gave fresh vigour to his witty and unsparing assailants.

Duprat, however, bore his unpopularity with great equanimity of temper; assured of the favour of Madame, he suffered himself not to be disconcerted by the virulence of the attacks upon his fame, comforting himself with the thought that if he bestowed a due regard to his own interests while holding office, he had as unscrupulously served his king in many a pressing emergency.

About the second week in August, 1525, the Duchess d'Alençon set out from Lyons on her way to Aigues-Mortes, where she was to embark for Spain. She was accompanied by Madame, who could not resolve to bid farewell to her daughter, and whose apprehensions were excited as to the ultimate issue of Marguerite's journey. The suite of the duchess consisted of M. de la Chastaigneraye, grand sénéchal of Poitou, and his wife, Marguerite's first lady; of Aymée de la Fayette, widow of François de Silly, grand bailiff of Caen, M. de St. Gillier, the sénéchal of Provence, and the Marshal de Montmorency, who was to meet her at Barcelona. She was attended besides by several other noblemen, by four gentlemen of the chamber, besides the necessary number of subordinate personages of her household.

The most rueful of the many lamentable laments put forth on the departure of the Duchess d'Alençon, was that of her enthusiastic admirer and servant, Clément Marot. The poet was taken prisoner at the battle of Pavia, while fighting bravely by the side of the king; but on account of his literary merit, he had recently obtained permission to return, without ransom, to his native land. The impatient Marot hastened back to prostrate himself at the feet of "his adorable mistress," when his journey was interrupted by an order of arrest, on suspicion of heresy, promulgated by the parliament at the suit of one Bouchard, a doctor of the university. The unfortunate poet, therefore, was thrown into prison in Paris, while his writings underwent the rigid scrutiny of Béda and the Faculty.

Marot had been incarcerated in the Châtelet about six days when Marguerite took her departure from Lyons. His miserable plight roused the compassion of his "adorable mistress," and as

soon as possible after her arrival in Spain, Marguerite despatched an order from her brother for the poet's immediate release. Great was Marot's thankfulness to escape from the clutches of the malicious doctor of theology who had so unexpectedly pounced upon him. He retired to Blois, where he was suffered to live unmolested under the protection of Madame, until the return of the Duchess d'Alençon from Spain.

The regent took five days' journey with her daughter from Lyons down the Rhone,[1] as far as Pont St. Esprit, so reluctant was Madame to say farewell. As may be imagined, from the fact that five days were consumed on the road between Lyons and Pont St. Esprit, the duchess and her daughter travelled slowly along; but there was no need to hasten, as the much longed-for safe conduct had not yet arrived; and it was Marguerite's feverish impatience to be with her brother that rendered it impossible for her to remain longer in Lyons awaiting this expected document. Madame wrote to the king to inform him that his sister had commenced her journey. "I have brought your sister on her way, monseigneur, as far as this place, which is one league from Pont St. Esprit, from whence she will set off to-morrow morning to pursue her road with the utmost diligence until she arrives on board the galley. This she would have done sooner if the said galley had been ready to receive her; and I hope, monseigneur, that this messenger will be able to give you sure information of the time of her arrival at Barcelona; for I assure you that she undertakes the voyage, actuated by such great affection for you, and she speaks to me so cheerfully of its result, that you may be confident all will pass without sorrow or vexation."[2] In another letter to the king, written a few days subsequently, the duchess says, in allusion to her son's illness, "the greatest good that I have received since the commencement of your illness has been, monseigneur, from the perusal of the letter you have written to your 'mignonne,' which she sent to me; as from its length, I know that the mind, as also the hand that traced it, are both again in good condition."[3]

After taking leave of Madame, Marguerite pursued her journey with great despatch to Aigues-Mortes, where the squadron waited to convey her to Barcelona.

[1] Letter de la Duchesse d'Alençon au Roi, Bibl. Roy., Supp. Fr., No. 2722.

[2] Lettre de la Duchesse d'Angoulême, au Roi, Docum. sur la Cap. de François I., No. 139.

[3] Ibid., No. 123.

After the duchess and her suite had been detained at Aigues-Mortes for nearly a fortnight the eagerly expected safe conduct arrived; but it was drawn in terms vague and unsatisfactory, and assured the duchess of liberty for three months only, — circumstances creating grave suspicion in the minds of Marguerite's advisers. The weather, meantime, had become so boisterous that the commanders of the squadron destined to convey the duchess to the shores of Spain declined to put to sea during the continuance of the tempestuous gales.

Nothing daunted, however, Marguerite steadily declared her determination to make the voyage at all hazards; and she refused to suffer longer time to be wasted by an appeal to the council of regency to obtain a passport expressed in more satisfactory language. "Mon cousin," wrote Marguerite from Aigues-Mortes to the Marshal de Montmorency, immediately before her embarkation, "the bearer of this letter will detail to you the hindrances I have had, and all the difficulties and objections I have been compelled to encounter because my safe conduct is not ample enough, nor drawn in suitable terms for me; besides which, the two couriers have not yet returned, bringing me that which I have been promised, by land. Nevertheless, I am resolved to take my chance; trusting that, at least on my arrival, they will suffer me to see the king. The desire I have to behold him makes me disregard all other things; and I am going to embark immediately, in weather that appears to give content to the mariners and others on board; for yesterday they were all of opinion that I ought not to undertake the voyage on account of the stormy weather we have had during the few last days." [1]

Besides writing this letter to Montmorency, Marguerite addressed another to the king. Suffering from the exhausting effects of fever and mental depression, Francis needed the consolation imparted by the enthusiastic letter written by his sister.

THE DUCHESS D'ALENÇON TO FRANCIS I.[2]

AIGUES-MORTES, August, 1525.

MONSEIGNEUR, — My messenger will relate to you how Heaven, the sea, and the advice of friends have combined to retard my jour-

[1] MS. Bibl. du Roy, F. Béth., No. 8551.
Suppl. Fr. Bibl. Roy., No. 2722, MS. 127.

ney. But at length He whom all things obey has vouchsafed to send us such favourable weather that all difficulties are overcome; and even those who doubted most yesterday evening have this morning counselled me to depart; which I am about to do, inspired with that ardent desire to see you that you alone, monseigneur, can appreciate. If I have hitherto delayed my departure on account of the bad weather, you will excuse a tardiness distasteful to me above measure; for I desire to see you with so infinite a desire that I must be silent on this matter until I tell it to you personally. I beseech you, monseigneur, to observe that my safe conduct is very limited; if you think I need one more ample, send it to me on my arrival at Barcelona. This uncertainty, however, nor the stormy sea, shall not hinder me now from proceeding to the spot where I can meet you. The fear of death, of prison, or of any imaginable evil, no longer daunts me; for I regard every danger incurred in your service as liberty, life, health, glory, and honour, so that I may participate in your fate, which I would willingly bear alone.

Your very humble and very obedient subject and sister,

MARGUERITE.

The French squadron, having the Duchess d'Alençon on board, set sail from Aigues-Mortes about the commencement of September, 1525. It consisted of six French and five Genoese vessels, all under the command of Andrea Doria; one of these latter had on board the Grand Master of Rhodes, Jourdain de l'Isle Adam, who was summoned to Spain to give account of himself and his proceedings, by the emperor.[1]

With fearless confidence, Marguerite committed herself upon those waves which, in an ill-omened hour, wafted her brother to the inhospitable shores of a prince who repaid his chivalrous trust by a duplicity and tyranny that, powerful as he was, the emperor found none, with the exception of his confidential advisers, to vindicate or to approve.

[1] Extrait de journal, en idiome Provençal, d'un bourgeois de Marseilles, Docum. sur la Cap. de François I., No. 142.

CHAPTER XI.

THE Duchess d'Alençon pursued her voyage with a rough sea and prosperous winds. Her attendants suffered severely from sickness, with the exception of the Sénéchal of Poitou; but Marguerite herself escaped this additional misery and bore her voyage well; "for," as she observes, in a letter to the king, written after her landing at Barcelona, "the extreme desire that I have to see your Majesty absorbed all other pains."[1]

Marguerite first landed, after quitting Aigues-Mortes, at Palamos, a strong fort on the coast of Catalonia. An unexpected pleasure awaited her here; for Brion happened to be passing through Palamos on his way to France, bearing the ratification of the truce and other despatches of the utmost importance for the regent. Overjoyed at being able to obtain such satisfactory though tardy news of her brother's condition, Marguerite invited Brion to sup with her. Afterwards they held a long conference of some hours. Brion announced the arrival of the king at Madrid, and informed the duchess, and the emperor, according to his promise, sent his officers and purveyors to precede her brother on his journey from Venyssollo to Madrid. He was accompanied by the Viceroy of Naples, and by a great train of Spanish nobles, amongst whom was Don Diego Lopez Hurtado de Mendoza, Duke of Infantado.[2] The king, Brion stated, was treated with every possible respect and indulgence consistent with the safe guardianship of his person.

On the arrival of Francis at Madrid the emperor despatched Véré, a gentleman of his household, to inquire with the greatest

[1] Lettre de la Duchesse d'Alençon au Roi à Madrid; MS. Bibl. Roy., Suppl. Fr. No. 2722.

[2] Lettre de M. d'Asparros à Madame la Régente, 24th August, 1525, Col. de Doc. Inédits sur l'Histoire de France, Captivité de François I.

solicitude after his captive's health, which he heard was again impaired. Few princes have exhibited greater dexterity than the Emperor Charles V. in the art of adapting the purport of their words to the exigencies of the occasion. Charles knew well that the king desired above all things to be admitted to an interview with him; and with cruel dissimulation, whenever Francis suffered from unusual depression, the emperor wrote to assure him that he was hastening to visit him, without, however, having the most remote intention of granting the boon so ardently expected, until his exorbitant demands were accepted. "I have heard from Véré that your health is failing, which news is very displeasing to me," wrote Charles to the king after his arrival at Madrid;[1] "for I wish you to enjoy as good health as you yourself can desire. If, when I passed so near to you some time ago, when you were well, and saw you not, it was because I thought that you did not want me; but now it will give me infinite displeasure not to visit you, being so close to where you are. Therefore I give you notice that next Tuesday, at latest, I will see you if it pleases God, who I pray may restore you to health."[2] But, as usual, the emperor found that his affairs, at the period he had fixed for visiting the king, were of so urgent a nature as to prevent him from quitting Toledo. Francis, nevertheless, received the consolation of learning that his ambassadors had at length procured the public proclamation of a truce for five months' duration.[3] The king, while on his road to Madrid, wrote to the Archbishop of Embrun, exhorting him to bring this matter to a satisfactory conclusion. He was solicitous on Marguerite's account, as her safe conduct could not otherwise be obtained, except on terms inconsistent with her safety. "I am of opinion that you accept and conclude the proposed truce. As for the affairs of Burgundy, it is my wish that you await the arrival of my sister; for the least that you can there offer to cede is too great for my will," wrote the king to his ambassadors at Toledo.[4]

The health of the king, meanwhile, continued to fail; the

[1] The king arrived at Madrid about the 10th or the 11th of August, 1525.
[2] Col. de Docum. Inédits, Cap. de François I., p. 309.
[3] The truce was signed at Toledo on the 5th of August.
[4] Lettre du Roi, à Monsieur d'Embrun, Col. de Docum. Inédits, Cap. de François I.

generous and noble mind of Francis, which had so bravely sustained him throughout his reverses, could no longer wrestle against despondency. Even the expected arrival of his sister failed to dissipate the gloom which oppressed him: his correspondence with Madame, before the signing of the truce, had been almost interdicted by the ungenerous policy of the emperor. The disgrace of defeat, and the weariness of captivity, were crushing the proud and sensitive spirit of the King of France. In one of his poems, Francis thus tenderly addressed the mother whom he so trusted and regretted: —

"Or sachez donc, O Madame, et ma mère !
Que de vous m'est l'absence trop amère;
Que diray plus, sinon que cognois bien,
Qu'en la beauté des lieux ne gist le bien." [1]

The condition of the king continued to give the emperor great anxiety. If his captive died a prisoner, no benefit would result from his great victory at Pavia. He therefore despatched Don Juan de Zuñiga to visit the king on his behalf, and to deliver a letter, in which the emperor congratulated Francis on the expected arrival of Madame d'Alençon in Spain, "whose speedy disembarkation I desire, and shall have great pleasure in learning." A few days afterwards Charles again wrote to the king, as Don Juan de Zuñiga apparently made a very unfavourable report of the king's health, so as greatly to kindle his master's apprehensions, and to induce him forthwith to write a doubly emphatic assurance of his long promised visit.

The affectionate style in which the emperor addressed him renewed the reliance that Francis had once reposed in his generosity; and as the truce opened again a free passage through Spain into his own dominions, the king despatched Brion to convey to Madame certain news of the signing of the armistice, and of the emperor's amicable dispositions.

Great was Marguerite's joy at the intelligence imparted by Brion; for the rigour which the Spanish government had latterly displayed in prohibiting intercourse between the two countries, in the hope of so subduing the fortitude of the king, had increased the uncertainty and peril of her mission. "I found Brion at Palamos, where I landed to sup, quitting my

[1] Epître à la Duchesse d'Angoulême, MS. Bibl. Royale, No. 7686.

vessel for the first time since I left Aigues-Mortes," wrote the duchess to her brother. "Truly, monseigneur, God decreed that I should so land, for otherwise I could not have seen him. You can easily believe the delight this meeting has given me; and to hear what you have been pleased to make known to Madame, as much for the consolation that I know the news will afford her, as for the sure hope which his words inspire me with of your speedy deliverance. I have despatched him (Brion) on his journey without loss of time, that the pleasure I take in his discourse may not retard the comfort and benefit that I know Madame will receive on his arrival."[1]

As soon as the emperor received intelligence that the Duchess d'Alençon was actually on her way to visit the king, he despatched Don Ugo de Monçada to await her arrival in Barcelona. The Viceroy of Naples was deputed to compliment Marguerite on her landing; but, as his presence was necessary to the emperor, his journey to Barcelona was delayed until certain tidings of the duchess were received at court.

Marguerite's journey into Spain, nothwithstanding their courteous speeches, was a distasteful event to Charles and his Council. They had purposely raised every impediment in their power, short of an absolute denial of the safe conduct, to frustrate her design; and the emperor, until officially informed of the fact by the king, refused to credit the rumour of her embarkation at Aigues-Mortes. As the evil was now beyond remedy, the emperor determined to put the best countenance on the matter, and to receive the duchess with becoming distinction; but at the same time he resolved to defend himself against her attractions or pleadings, by assuming a deportment, courteous, indeed, but never approaching familiarity, by which he might possibly find himself betrayed into concessions subversive of the terms of peace which he and his Council were resolved to enforce. The Viceroy of Naples, therefore — one the least susceptible to feminine influence amongst his courtiers — was deputed by Charles to escort the duchess to Madrid.

Marguerite, on her landing at Barcelona, was received with great magnificence. The authorities of the town, arrayed in their official robes, assembled to greet her, as did many of the

[1] Lettre de la Duchesse d'Alençon au Roi, MS. Bibl. Roy., Suppl. Fr. No. 2722.

principal nobles of Catalonia. As soon as the duchess set her foot on Spanish ground, the emperor's envoys, the Viceroy of Naples, and Don Ugo de Monçada approached, and presented the homage and the congratulations of their imperial master on the happy termination of her voyage. Marguerite had now an opportunity of expressing personally to the viceroy her sense of his considerate deportment towards her royal brother; and doubtless she availed herself of the occasion with her accustomed grace and dignity. Her reception by the people was enthusiastic; for the Spaniards universally repudiated their sovereign's policy towards his fallen foe; and they appreciated Marguerite's devotion in so fearlessly risking the loss of her own liberty.[1]

The duchess spent nearly the entire period of her brief sojourn at Barcelona in writing to her brother, to whom she immediately despatched Montmorency. The report that the viceroy brought of the king's health was far from reassuring; and Marguerite's impatience became so great to be with him that on her way to Madrid she scarcely halted for repose or for refreshment. The duchess and her suite travelled in litters, escorted by a guard of honour, under the command of Don Ugo de Monçada.[2] When Marguerite found herself alone, defenceless, and travelling into the heart of Spain surrounded by a Spanish escort, frequent must have been her misgivings.

Marguerite probably landed in Spain about the 7th of September; for on the 10th of the same month she writes to Montmorency from Fraga, a town on the confines of Arragon, and one of the first places at which she halted after her departure from Barcelona. Here she found letters awaiting her from the marshal, which contained tidings of the king's continued indisposition. In her reply Marguerite expresses her deep anxiety at this intelligence, and her regret that Montmorency's courier, who was proceeding into France, was not the bearer of a letter, however brief, from the king to Madame; "for," says Marguerite, "I know the anxiety that it will give Madame to receive a

[1] Lettre de la Duchesse d'Alençon au Roi, MS. Bibl. Roy., No. 2722, Suppl. Fr.

[2] The historian Guicciardini speaks in very unfavourable terms of the character of Don Ugo de Monçada. "He was," says he, "a pupil and apt scholar of Cæsar Borgia, Duke de Valentinois, of whose manners and morals he was a strict imitator."

despatch from where my brother is abiding, or from myself, without letters from the king. On this account, I pray you contrive, if it be possible, that the said lord writes something to Madame, that I may have excuse for despatching the messenger into France." Marguerite sent back the courier, whose name was Pirigort, to Montmorency, for the letter that she desired her brother to write to Madame. She well knew the disappointment the latter would feel at not receiving letters from Francis; and how her maternal solicitude would forthwith magnify the tidings sent to her of her son's indisposition.

Marguerite found solace in her pen as she travelled along: during the dreary hours of her journey she wrote letters, composed poetry, and alternately read or conversed with her lady of honour, the Sénéchale of Poitou. Sometimes, also, the sénéchale wrote under her dictation: at others she recited verses to cheer her royal mistress; who, overpowered with anxiety, often sought relief in tears. About the second or third day of her journey, the duchess despatched Guillaume du Bellay on to Madrid with letters to Montmorency and the king. As every incident connected with the journey of Marguerite to Madrid is deeply interesting, and but little known, both these letters are given at full length.

To my cousin M. le Maréchal de Montmorency.[1]

Mon Cousin, — The bearer [2] of this letter has rendered me so many services that I cannot refrain from commending him to you, for in all he has acquitted himself so wonderfully well that it is impossible to do better. I pray you inform him of my sentiments. He is now preceding us, to provide suitable lodging for my train, and to give you news of me, and of the period when I can be with you, which in my opinion will not be before Wednesday morning, for I assure you that I feel very weary; but my intense desire to reach Madrid is such that even fatigue will be welcome to your good cousin,

Marguerite.

This letter is dictated by the duchess, and written probably by the Sénéchale of Poitou. Later in the day, however, Marguerite added a postscript in her own hand-writing. A

[1] MS. Bibl. Roy., F. de Béthune, No. 8514.

[2] Guillaume du Bellay, Sieur de Langey,— the same who penetrated in disguise into Spain, at the request of the Duchesse d'Angoulême.

messenger from Montmorency, it would seem, had meantime met the duchess to announce, judging by her mysterious response, the probability of an unexpected *rencontre* with the emperor, on her arrival at Madrid; and to provide against such contingency, the marshal sent her, on the part of the king, some hints for her guidance.

"I have received your letter brought by the courier, who is just arrived with Figuerol,[1] and if I find myself circumstanced as you say, I will not fail to act according to your desire. But, from what I understand from Don Ugo, as well as from Figuerol, there is little probability of such an event; for the emperor is about to depart straight for Toledo. I need not mention the joy I feel on approaching a place (Madrid) at which I have so long desired to be; believe me I have never known before the worth of such a brother, nor could I have thought it possible that I loved him so well!"

Marguerite evidently disbelieved that Charles intended to pay his long promised visit to the king; or that courtesy would induce him to receive her on her arrival at Madrid. But the emperor had long been seriously concerned for the health of his prisoner; and tidings of most alarming nature reached him of the prostration of strength, mental and bodily, which had lately befallen the king. Indeed, the duchess herself suspected not how ill her brother was, or the extent of the ravages wrought by the fever which consumed his strength, — increased as the king's malady was by the low and unhealthy situation of his prison in Madrid. Charles quitted Toledo on the first of September, and removed to Pinto; on the 3d he journeyed to Guadarrama; on the 8th he was at Segovia, where he probably was sojourning when Montmorency wrote to Marguerite.[2] The duchess also despatched by Du Bellay the following enthusiastic and tender letter to her brother: —

THE DUCHESS D'ALENÇON TO THE KING AT MADRID.[3]

MONSEIGNEUR, — I send so trusty a servant as my messenger, that I leave him to relate everything which has befallen us, which he will

[1] The commander Figuerol was often employed by the emperor on confidential missions to the king, and to the regent. His services were afterwards acknowledged by Francis, who presented him with a valuable gold chain.

[2] Journal des Itinéraires et résidences de Charles Quint, tirés des Papiers d'Etat du Cardinal de Granvelle.

[3] MS. Bibl. Roy. Suppl. Fr. No. 122.

do at greater length, and more satisfactorily than I can by letter. Nevertheless, his sufficiency shall not prevent me from entreating you to believe that if I can be of any service to you, even at the cost of scattering my ashes to the wind (*jusques à mettre au vent la cendre de mes ous*), nothing will be amiss, difficult, or painful; but all will seem, on the contrary, consolation, repose, and honour.

Monseigneur, I feel now the strength of that love which God implanted in the hearts of us three;[1] for things which I should have deemed of impossible accomplishment, I find easy when I think of you — as affection for you compels me to desire, for your good, that which for my own repose I should sooner die than wish.

Supplicating Him, the Author of my being, not to render life so useless to me but that it may serve to obtain your deliverance, — to earn which blessing I should esteem captivity as welcome liberty, —

Your very humble and very obedient subject and sister,

MARGUERITE.

As she journeyed along the duchess employed herself by composing a poem expressive of the anxiety which she felt to be with her brother. The verses are written with much pathos, and reveal the intensity of Marguerite's distress. "An hour seems to me a hundred years," writes the duchess; "my litter moves not, but appears to retreat. Oh, how long is the way to that goal where rests all my delight! I look on all sides to see if any messenger arrives; for I pray God without ceasing to restore health to my king. When no one sees me, my eyes weep sore; then to paper I confide my grief. Such is my mournful employ! Oh! welcome would be he, who, knocking at my door, should say: 'The king is restored to health!' His sister then, whose state is now worse than death, would embrace the messenger who brought such news of her brother's welfare." The following are the lines as written by Marguerite: —

CHANSON FAICTE PAR MADAME MARGUERITE DANS SA LICTIERE DURANT LA MALLADYE DU ROI.

Le désir du bien que j'attends
Me donne de travail matière,
Une heure me dure cent ans,
Et me semble que ma lictière
Ne bouge, ou retourne en arrière,
Tant j'ay de m'advancer désir.
O qu'elle est longue, la carrière
Où gist à la fin mon plaisir!

[1] Marguerite, Francis, and Madame.

Je regarde de tous costez
Pour voir s'il n'arrive personne,
Priant sans cesse, n'en doubtez,
Dieu, que santé à mon Roy donne.
Quand nul ne voy, l'œil j'abandonne
A plorer; puis sur le papier
Un peu de ma douleur j'ordonne :
Voilà mon douloureux mestier!

O qu'il sera le bien venu,
Celuy qui, frappant à ma porte
Dira : le Roy est revenu
En sa santé très bonne et forte!
Alors sa sœur, plus mal que morte,
Courra baiser le messager,
Qui telles nouvelles apporte
Que son frère est hors de danger.

Whilst Marguerite relieved her suspense by the passionate expression of her grief in verse, the king's health succumbed before the insidious malady prostrating his strength and energies. The fever made such rapid progress, and its debilitating effects were so excessive, that Francis no longer rose from his couch; he could neither eat, drink, nor sleep; and nothing had power to rouse him from a torpor rendering him indifferent to all around. Even the name of his "mignonne," his bright and cherished sister Marguerite, fell on his ear unheeded. The powers of endurance, which Francis had exercised so long and nobly, failed; and he yielded to the despondency which hardens itself against consolation. Montmorency, inexpressibly shocked on his arrival at Madrid at the change in his royal master's health, hastened Marguerite's journey as much as possible, without revealing to her the extent of his apprehensions, knowing how bitter, even then, was the suspense she endured. The emperor, however, being fully informed by his own physicians, whom he had sent to visit Francis, of the failing condition of his captive's health, commanded the instant removal of the king to apartments in the palace del Arco, situated in a more healthy part of Madrid, until suitable lodgings could be prepared in the royal palace within the Alcazar. The prison of Francis had been in the square tower De Los Lusanes, formerly one of the strongest towers of the fortifications of Madrid, and which still rears its gloomy front opposite to the Hotel de Ville. This change not producing its hoped-for effect on the health of the

king, Charles hastily summoned his Council, and announced his resolution to depart for Madrid, to visit Francis, and to receive the Duchess d'Alençon, whose arrival was now daily expected. In grave astonishment Charles's ministers listened to his address; for the emperor having so long postponed his visit, they at once perceived the mischievous interpretation likely to be put on this interview with the king, in, as was then supposed, his extremity. Anxious for their master's fame, De Lannoy and the Chancellor Gattinara in vain tried to dissuade Charles from this step, representing that unless he intended to grant liberty to his captive without conditions or ransom, the moment was an ill-chosen one for the long-deferred interview. When the emperor had once resolved upon a measure, it was no easy task for his ministers to induce him to act upon their advice. Their counsel, therefore, remained disregarded; and Charles, who was sojourning at Buytrago, to enjoy the pleasures of the chase, pertinaciously insisted on setting out on the following day for Madrid.[1]

On the morning of the 18th of September, 1525, an imperial chamberlain presented himself before the king, to announce that during the day the emperor intended to pay him a visit of friendly condolence. This intimation of Charles's intentions produced not the slightest emotion on the sore and weary heart of the king; and the news of his intended tardy performance of this act of indispensable courtesy and kindness was received with indifference. The emperor, attended by a numerous suite, arrived to visit the king between eight and nine o'clock in the evening. Charles ordered his attendants to await him in the antechamber, and entered the royal apartment accompanied only by De Lannoy, and preceded by the Marshal de Montmorency, bearing a lighted torch.[2] The king was reposing on his bed, feeling too weak to rise; on the right of the couch stood the Bishop of Senlis. Charles fixed his keen and eager gaze on the wasted features of the king. "Your imperial Majesty has at length come to see your prisoner die!" exclaimed Francis, as the emperor advanced to salute him. Charles hastily replied, "You are not my prisoner, but my brother, and my friend. I have no other design than to

[1] Docum. sur la Captivité de François I. Three individuals of Charles's Council alone supported him in this resolve; these were the Dukes of Calabria, Hijar, and Naxara.

[2] Ferreras, Hist. de España, t. ix.

give you liberty, with all the satisfaction that you can desire." "I expected no less a thing from your Majesty's loyalty and honour," rejoined the king, with prompt dignity. The two monarchs then entered into conversation, during the course of which the wily Charles deplored the political necessity that compelled him to prolong the captivity of his friend and brother. Throughout the interview the deportment of the king was dignified and collected; for during the entire period of his painful captivity, never did Francis forget that a crown, at that time the most brilliant in Europe, encircled his brow. It was this admirable union of majesty and affability which proved so captivating to the Spaniards, as well as to his own more impulsive subjects; and that raised — notwithstanding his arbitrary enforcement of his prerogative — the enthusiasm of the French to a height they never lavished on any previous sovereign. The attractions of the accomplished gentleman and of the gallant cavalier were so happily blended with the dignity of carriage becoming the mighty monarch that Charles himself was fascinated. After the lapse of half an hour, spent in conversation on indifferent subjects, the emperor withdrew, perceiving that Francis was too indisposed to render it advisable for him to prolong his visit. He embraced the king, and took leave of him with these words: "Mon frère, do not trouble yourself about anything besides your cure and restoration to health; for even did you wish to remain my prisoner I would not consent. I promise you a satisfactory and honourable deliverance from captivity; and after the arrival of Madame la Duchesse at Toledo, we will devise such measures to hasten it that you will be both joyous and content."[1] The lords who had accompanied the emperor then entered the apartment of the king, and prostrating themselves at his feet kissed his hand.

On the following day, Wednesday, September 19, Marguerite arrived at Madrid. The emperor, attended by a brilliant court, received her on alighting from her litter, at the foot of the flight of steps at the portal of the imperial palace in the Alcazar.[2] The emperor approached Marguerite with a lowly obeisance; he then kissed her on the forehead, and with words of profound

[1] Col. de Documents sur la Captivité de François I., No. 222, Protestation du Roi, contre le Traité de Madrid.

[2] Ibid., No. 156; Mémoires de Du Bellay; Ferreras, Hist. de España.

courtesy welcomed her to Madrid. The duchess, we are told, made a dignified reply to the emperor's address; and accepting the hand offered to her by Charles, entered the palace, passing between two lines of courtiers.

Marguerite appeared attired in her widow's robes of black velvet. Not a colour or a jewel relieved the sombre hue of her attire, which displayed to the greatest advantage the exquisite tints of her complexion.[1] A white veil shrouded her head, and drooped from her shoulders in graceful folds to the ground. The emperor's admiration was so visibly demonstrated, that the nobles in Marguerite's train formed the most sanguine hopes of the success of her personal negotiation for the release of the king. The Sénéchale of Poitou, Madame de Silly, and the other ladies and gentlemen in the duchess's suite, followed their royal mistress, and were afterwards severally presented by her to the emperor. When this tedious ceremonial was over, Charles offered his hand to Marguerite, to conduct her to her brother's apartment.[2] But the intelligence which there greeted the duchess was heart-rending; the king's malady had augmented so greatly since the previous evening that the gravest apprehensions were entertained for its result. Francis had scarcely life enough in him to respond to the agitated greetings of his sister: he was in bed, attended by two of his own physicians, and by other two[3] in the service of the emperor; and reduced to so deplorable a degree of weakness from the severity of the fever that even Marguerite's presence, and the sight of her tears, failed to rouse him from the apathy in which he lay. The emperor silently stood by the king's couch for some minutes, contemplating his captive, then profoundly bowing to the duchess, he retired, and quitted Madrid the same evening.[4]

Intense was that anguish which overpowered Marguerite as she knelt by her brother's couch. She arrived in Madrid buoyant with the hope of rescuing him from captivity, and of restoring him to the country which so bitterly mourned his absence; now it would seem as if her journey had been made for the sad

[1] Varillas.

[2] Col. de Documents sur la Captivité de François I., No. 156; Ferreras, Hist. de España.

[3] The names of the two imperial physicians in attendance on the king were Alfaro and Narsi.

[4] Ferreras; Sandoval, Hist. del Emp. Carlos V.

consolation only of witnessing his decease. Every remedy which had been before successfully applied to check the malady failed to rally the almost exhausted powers of life. Montmorency and the Bishop of Senlis besought in their distress Marguerite's advice and assistance; but the affectionate forethought of the duchess for her brother could suggest nothing that their zeal had not previously essayed. Sorrowful and agonizing were these moments which Marguerite spent alone in the vast fortress-palace of the kings of Spain; but to God she fled for refuge in her extremity, to supplicate Him to avert the calamity from which no earthly hand seemed able to rescue her.

Francis himself expressed no hope of recovery; and soon after his sister's arrival, he received the last sacraments of the Church with every outward sign of devotion and penitence. Afterwards, while his attendants surrounded his bed, the king, who had been for some time speechless, suddenly again besought God to pardon his sins; he then feebly recited in Latin, Hezekiah's beautiful prayer, — "Ego dixi in dimidio dierum meorum," as far as the words "Domine, vim patior; responde pro me!"[1] which sentence he repeated several times most devoutly. In the course of a few hours the king became insensible. The physicians in waiting then pronounced his recovery hopeless, and warned the duchess to prepare for the worst. "I believed in the king's desperate condition," wrote De Selve to the parliament, "on the judgment of two of his own physicians, and two of the emperor's; their opinion being confirmed by all the outward signs of approaching death, for the king was some time without speaking, hearing, or recognizing any one."[2]

In this extremity Marguerite's courage did not desert her. Conscious how grave was her responsibility, and that the king's servants looked to her for example and direction, she had self-command enough to repress her grief. The day of the king's greatest peril was Saturday, September 22. On the previous day, the French ambassadors arrived from Toledo, having been summoned thence, to take leave, as it was thought, of their

[1] Isaiah xxxviii.; Lettre du Président de Selve au Parlement; Régistres du Parlement.

[2] Registres du Parlement. Ferreras states that at one time the Duchess d'Alençon, believing that her brother had expired, drew the sheet over his face. Hist. de España.

royal master. The Spanish people of all classes manifested the utmost solicitude for the recovery of Francis. Masses were celebrated in the principal churches of Madrid, Toledo, and of other towns in the kingdom, for his restoration to health. The emperor, whose fame would have suffered had it been said that the King of France died from the rigour of his captivity, daily received despatches from the Spanish physicians attending Francis, and from Alarçon, governor of the garrison of Madrid. The king, nevertheless, grew weaker, as the power of swallowing food had failed him. All hope in human aid being now dissipated, Marguerite assembled her household in her private apartments, to unite with her in a solemn supplication to God to restore the king. She afterwards caused the Holy Communion to be administered to herself, and to every one present.[1] This service was performed by one of the chaplains in the suite of the duchess, and was doubtless, more or less in accord with the tenets of the reformed faith. Marguerite's principal almoner, Michel d'Arande, did not, however, accompany his royal mistress into Spain as it was feared that his undisguised hostility to the Romish faith would rouse the intolerant zeal of the Spanish people, and perhaps injure the cause of the captive king.

This solemn service was performed on the 22d of September. That it differed in some respect from the prescribed ritual of the Roman Catholic faith is evident from the fact that Marguerite afterwards repaired without delay, with her ladies, to the chamber of the king, to be present, with the rest of the French ambassadors and nobles, at the celebration of mass, which was performed at a temporary altar, by the Archbishop of Embrun. Kneeling, surrounded by the king's weeping attendants, herself bathed in tears, Marguerite fervently united her prayers to theirs. Solemn must have been that scene in the chamber of Francis. The mighty King of France lay apparently dying in a strange land; while within that small and lonely prison-chamber knelt the sister, whose presence was cheering to him as the light of day, — Montmorency, and many other faithful friends, mingling their prayers in his behalf with the impressive intercessions of the archbishop. At the elevation of the Host, the archbishop advanced to the bedside of Francis and holding it aloft, solemnly exhorted him to look upon it, and adore. "Then the king,"

[1] Lettre du Président de Selve au Parlement; Régistres du Parlement.

writes the President de Selve,[1] "who had been for long deprived of sight and hearing, opened his eyes, and fixed them intently upon the Holy Sacrament, and clasped his hands. After the mass, Madame la Duchesse again caused the said sacrament to be presented to the king; and incontinently the king exclaimed: 'It is my God, who will cure both my soul and my body; I pray you that I may receive Him.' Upon this it was observed to the said sieur, that he could not swallow the wafer; but he replying that he was able, then Madame la Duchesse commanded that the holy wafer should be divided, which being done, he received it with such marks of contrition and extreme humility that there was not one person present who did not melt into tears. Madame la Duchesse then partook of the other half of the said Holy Sacrament. From that hour the said sieur has continued to amend; so much so, that he is now quit of all danger, which is a miraculous work of God, as all the French and Spaniards unanimously testify."

The Romish Church did not fail to ascribe the king's sudden revival to a miracle wrought by the Host; but doubtless the crisis of the fever being past, the solemn celebration of the rites of his Church round his bed roused Francis from the lethargy of exhaustion in which it had left him. From that day forwards, however, with the exception of one slight relapse, the king was pronounced out of all immediate peril of death, though many weeks elapsed before he could rise from his bed.

The tender devotion of his sister during his illness was ever gratefully remembered by Francis. To her care he acknowledged that he owed his life, — an obligation he should always cherish her for; "and he faithfully kept his word," says Brantôme; "for she (Marguerite), like a tender sister and friend, went to visit him by the good pleasure and safe conduct of the emperor. But in so piteous a state did she find her brother, that had she not arrived he was a dead man; for she understood his temperament and complexion better than all his physicians, and caused him to be so well treated according to her own knowledge, that he was speedily cured." [2]

The care lavished upon him, and above all, the presence of his sister produced a rapid improvement in the king's health. Mar-

[1] Régistres du Parlement.

[2] Brantôme, Dames Illustres, Vie de Marguerite de Valois.

guerite seldom quitted his side; and she exerted her manifold attractions of wit and sprightly vivacity to chase away his gloom, and to awaken renewed interest for occupations in which they once mutually delighted. Seated by her brother's couch, Marguerite would sometimes recite a sonnet of her own composition, or relate a *nouvelle*. An adept in the art of composing witty *jeux d'esprit*, and in the invention of emblems and mottoes, she would thus often entertain him, and by the brightness of her presence dispel the melancholy of hours which before her arrival were dark with painful retrospect.

During the king's illness Marguerite composed the following poem; it expressed the fervent prayer of her heart, and its utterance in words relieved the agony of the hours of suspense which she spent by his side:—

RONDEAU.

Sur: Domine! Salvum fac regem et exaudi nos in die quâ invocaverimus te.

Saulvez le Roy, ô Seigneur gratieux!
Et exaulcez ce jour, en vos sainctz cyeux,
Nous qui pour luy invocquons vostre grâce.
Las! retournez vostre benigne face,
Pour essuyer les larmes de nos yeux.

Vous estes seul, par sur tous aultres dieux,
Puissant, piteux, miséricordieux:
Monstrez-le-nous, bientost, en peu d'espace:
Saulvez le Roy!

Nous cognoissons que noz maulx vitieux.
Méritent bien les tourments ennuyeux,
Que maintenant justice nous pourchasse;
Vostre bonté nostre malice passe:
En ceste foy vous prions pour le myeulz:
Saulvez le Roy![1]

The chamber in which Marguerite and her brother spent so many melancholy hours was still in existence when the Duke de St. Simon resided as French ambassador at the court of Spain in the reign of Philip V. The duke describes it in his memoirs as a small apartment, somewhat increased in dimensions by a deep recess of the wall on the right on entering, opposite to the

[1] Col. de Documents sur l'Hist. de France, Cap. de François I.

window. A double grate of iron, strongly imbedded in the wall, defended the window on the outside; within, a narrow glazed casement admitted light. There was space in the chamber for chairs, coffers, tables, besides a bed. The height from the window to the foot of the tower, which stood on the banks of the Mançanares, was about a hundred feet; and during the period that Francis was detained there, two battalions of soldiers kept guard night and day on the platform beneath. The room, while inhabited by Francis, was hung with rich tapestry wrought into compartments, displaying the arms of France, — the crown, the shield and *fleur-de-lis*, surrounded by the collar of the order of St. Michael the Archangel. The ground between was divided into diamond-shaped compartments, each division bearing alternately the cipher of Francis, his badge, — a salamander, — and the *fleur-de-lis* surmounted by a royal crown.[1]

A day or two after the king was pronounced out of danger, the treasurer Babou arrived at Madrid from Paris, bringing letters from Brion and Robertet to the Marshal de Montmorency; also, one from the Duchess d'Angoulême to Marguerite. Brion's letter is dated September 21; he found Madame, on his arrival in France, in good health at Condrieu, to which place she journeyed from Tournon after taking leave of her daughter. He states that Madame had received the letters written by Marguerite to announce her safe arrival at Barcelona; but Brion describes the duchess as being "in marvellous distress" at not having heard from the king during the space of a month, especially as Marguerite had informed her of his indisposition.[2] On the following day, September 22, Brion wrote again to announce the arrival of the expected messenger from Spain, bringing letters for Madame from the Duchess d'Alençon, which had given her great joy. Marguerite, who wrote this letter on her road to Madrid,[3] refrained from telling her mother of the king's increased indisposition, but spoke of Francis as likely soon to be in improved health. Montmorency, however, had sent private information of his true condition to Brion and to others of the Council. Brion expresses the grave anxiety the intelligence gave them, and

[1] A copy of the design of this tapestry is still preserved in the Bibl. du Roi.

[2] Lettre de M. de Brion au Roi, No. 150, Documents sur la Captivité de François I.

[3] Probably at Fraga.

their intention to hide the news from Madame until the next despatches from Spain arrived, which they hoped might contain missives written in the king's own hand.[1] The letter of the Duchess d'Angoulême to Marguerite is as follows:[2] —

The Duchess d'Angoulême to Madame Marguerite her daughter.

M'Amye, — I have received all your letters, the last to-day by Jours,[3] which has given me not a little pleasure to hear thereby of your arrival (at Barcelona), your reception, and the safety of your passage. I must not omit to tell you, and believe it on the word of your mother, that this news has given me infinite comfort; and I have firm hope that as God has so protected you at the commencement, your voyage will be happy and profitable; besides, from what you will hear from Bryon, as also by a courier I am sending and by another gentleman in the service of Monsieur d'Ambrun, you will perceive that there is very great hope of affairs taking the end we desire. I pray you, above all things take special concern for your health, and send me often news of it; as for my own health, it is satisfactory.

You will hear in detail from Babou of the matters it is necessary you should be informed; they are things that you must maintain with a firm hand. Finally, be sure that as the passage (into Spain) is opened by the truce, you shall frequently see the handwriting of

Your good mother, Loyse.

On the 23d of September, the day following that on which the king was thought to be at extremity, the President de Selve and his colleagues wrote a formal account, addressed to the Privy Council, of the desperate condition of the king, and of the little chance there appeared to be of his recovery. The court was at Tournon; many of the princes and governors of the various provinces happened at the time to be in attendance on Madame. The disastrous news struck consternation into every bosom. It was resolved, nevertheless, still to conceal the evil tidings from Madame, whose precarious health was already failing beneath her anxiety. In positive anticipation that the next post from Spain would bring tidings of the demise of Francis, the Duke de Vendôme and the lords of the Council commenced the requisite preliminaries to insure the immediate proclamation of the young dauphin as king, under the regency

[1] Lettre de M. de Brion à M. de Montmorency.
[2] Ibid., No. 154.
[3] A courier.

of the Duchess d'Angoulême.[1] Their measures were carefully concealed from Madame; whose state of suspense at length became so extreme that she fell into such depression of spirits as to be unable to eat, to sleep, or yet to grant audiences to the ministers and nobles of the court. The temporary absence of the duchess from the Council no doubt aided the Duke de Vendôme and Duprat in withholding from her the intelligence which they had received; yet it is probable that Louisa's mental anguish arose from a presentiment of her son's danger, and a torturing suspicion that something was concealed from her. The consternation which reigned around, and the unusual activity displayed by her Council, were facts of too significant a nature to escape the observation of a princess of Louisa's penetration.

All kinds of extravagant rumours, meanwhile, became current in Paris relative to the king's illness: at one time it was reported that he was dead; at another that a treaty had been signed with the emperor, and that he was on his road back to his own dominions. Certain information of the king's danger reached the Parliament on Tuesday, the 3d day of October, just eleven days after his fever took a favourable turn; but before Madame was made acquainted with her son's illness. The intelligence is thus chronicled on the parliamentary registers: —

"To-day (Tuesday, October 3), arrived intelligence at this Palais of the illness of the king, who is at Madrid in Spain, and is said to have fallen ill of a slow fever, *et quod ipse inciderit in appoplexim*, which is an incurable malady. It is reported, also, that the said lord the king is deceased at Madrid; which God forbid, as it would be the greatest evil and misfortune that ever happened to this realm of France."

At one o'clock in the morning of the following day,[2] which was the feast of St. Francis, the happy news of the king's safety reached the court, which, for the health of Madame, had removed from Tournon to Lyons. Madame was then for the first time informed of the peril which had menaced her son. Her grief, joy, and thankfulness were at first overwhelming; she then repaired to the chapel of the Celestine Convent, where she

[1] Lettre de Madame la Duchesse d'Angoulême aux ambassadeurs en Espagne, Docum. sur la Captivité de François I., No. 172.

[2] Wednesday, October 4.

had taken up her abode, to return thanks to God for the mercy vouchsafed to her.

The chancellor, who still met with the same determined opposition from the parliament and the people respecting his appropriation, under the Concordat, of the archbishopric of Sens, and who was therefore looking at times "very pensive,"[1] wrote to congratulate the king on his recovery. Speaking of Madame, he says:[2] "The bearer of this letter, who is the same individual that brought us news of your convalescence, came just in time; for had he delayed, I verily believe Madame would have fallen so seriously ill that it would have been no easy matter to restore her again. For eight days she remained without sleeping, having lost her appetite, and showing well by her countenance what she was enduring at heart. Your good subjects and servants, therefore, were in double distress, on account of your illness, and her indisposition, which visibly augmented." Duprat then proceeds to eulogize Madame's skilful administration of the finances, and the regularity and precision with which she governed everything. "Sire," writes he, "thanks be to God, all things remain, for the times, as well as can be expected. Madame has caused eight hundred men-at-arms to be disbanded, which has been effected by companies of twenty at a time, not to give discontent. The bands of foreign infantry have likewise been broken, which is a great relief to your finances. The waste of the public money has been much less than every one thought, on account of the good order Madame established. The Swiss have received, since St. John's Day, the sum of 230,000 livres Tournois, and the English, this month of October, 120,000 livres Tournois. At the end of this month, the Swiss receive a further sum of 100,000 livres Tournois, and the English are to be paid in November a like sum to that before delivered, besides the payment of various private pensions. Madame manages so well that she is able to provide for all out

[1] "The States have petitioned the said lady (Madame) not to place any impediment to prevent the execution of justice throughout the realm, which has not hitherto been done, to the perdition of the kingdom, and the ruin of the king, who is a prisoner, for having allowed persons of low estate to meddle with the government, amongst whom is meant the chancellor, who is looking just now very pensive." (Avis donné en Angleterre de ce qui se passait en France pendant la Captivité du Roi, Docum. sur la Cap. de François I., No. 185.)

[2] Lettre du chancelier Duprat au Roi, ibid., No. 187.

of the ordinary revenue of the kingdom, without having recourse to loans or other extraordinary methods of raising money." Louisa's punctual payment of the subsidies and gratuities which she bound herself to provide, contributed greatly to maintain her political ascendency throughout Europe, and which during the captivity of Francis so often perplexed and circumvented the schemes of the imperial cabinet. Madame's economy furnished her with the means of paying the formidable army of spies which she maintained at all the principal foreign courts, besides enabling her to grant pensions to not a few of the leading personages about those sovereigns whom it was her son's interest to propitiate.

The Duchess d'Angoulême also wrote to her daughter by Pommeraye, but refers her to the messenger for every particular respecting herself. She next informs Marguerite of her intention to despatch another gentleman to Madrid on the following day, "in order that he may bring back without fail certain news of the good health of the king and of you, while, meantime, I praise God for the grace that he has conferred upon us, in memory of which He ought to be eternally honoured and lauded by you and by your good mother — LOYSE." The duchess then adds, by way of postscript: "I do not write to the king, fearing at present to give him weariness; but I wish you had power to convey to him my commendations as heartily as I think them."[1] A formal despatch from Louisa to her faithful ambassadors accompanied these letters, in which she details her past sufferings and present joy, and thanks them for their loyal and prudent letter, which conveyed the intelligence of the king's dangerous condition to the Council: —

Messieurs d'Ambrun, Premier Président, Marshal de Montmorency, Sénéchal d'Armagnac, Seigneur de St. André, and Treasurer Babou:

I have seen your letters of the 23d instant; but they were submitted to me only after the arrival of La Pommeraye. I think that if they had been before shown to me, I should have died; forasmuch as even the letter which my daughter wrote, detailing the malady of the king, but yet giving hopes of his cure, overwhelmed me with such sorrow and concern that I could neither sleep, eat, drink, nor even receive the princes and lords around me here, who often made it their loyal duty to visit and condole with me. The thing which I found most grievous

[1] Docum. sur la Captivité de François I., No. 155.

to bear was, that after receiving letters from my daughter which were of the same date as your last, I was for six days without hearing any news. Nevertheless, your letters were prudently and wisely written, as became good and loyal servants. I feel assured that you understood that they would not be laid before me without due precaution, but might serve to admonish the said princes and lords of the Council to provide betimes all necessary and requisite things, which, though not without grave sorrow and displeasure, they set about. I thank God that they, through your letters, thinking the worst had happened, remained cordially united, resolving to live and die in obedience to Monseigneur le dauphin and me, as they have been accustomed to do.[1]

This gracious and feeling acknowledgment of the letter which it became their painful duty to write, renewed the zeal of Madame's ambassadors, and they eagerly awaited permission to commence, in concert with Marguerite, their intricate negotiations. Louisa then formally notified her son's recovery to the parliament.[2] The high court thereupon ordained that its members should march in procession, on the following day, from the Sainte Chapelle to Notre Dame de Paris, the true cross being borne before them,[3] there to render thanks to Almighty God for the health which he has been pleased to restore to the king, and to supplicate him for his Majesty's speedy deliverance.

Francis, meantime, was making certain, though slow progress towards recovery. The depressing effects of the fever, nevertheless, still hung about him, and rendered him weary and impatient of his detention: he longed to rescue the spotless *fleur-de-lis* of France from the rude grasp of his hereditary foe, and to redeem his knightly honour, prostrate at the fatal field of Pavia. The gloomy seclusion in which he lived retarded his recovery; the sombre aspect of Madrid, and the strict *surveillance* exercised over his smallest action, were so many causes of irritation to the excitable spirit of Francis. The repeated failures of his ambassadors to negotiate with the inexorable Charles, except on terms inconsistent with his kingly honour, caused him perpetual restlessness and disquietude. The emperor frequently declared that

[1] Lettre de la Duchesse d'Angoulême à ses Ambassadeurs en Espagne, ibid., No. 172.

[2] The letter written by Madame was dated Lyons, October 5.

[3] A large portion of the true cross was supposed to be preserved amongst the relics of the Sainte Chapelle.

upon those terms alone would he restore the king to freedom; while Francis as pertinaciously protested that sooner than yield the rights of his crown he would die in captivity. It became then a trial of resolution of purpose between the two monarchs. Charles had this present advantage, that he might perhaps coerce his captive into signing dishonourable concessions; though, as he was admonished by Gattinara, he could not compel the king, when once at liberty, to execute them. To this obvious fact the Chancellor Gattinara repeatedly called his royal master's attention; observing that it would be better to insure the punctual performance of the treaty by exacting terms less derogatory to the honour and liberties of the French people, than by the rigour of his demands to induce the ministers of Madame to advise the king to agree to any conditions, previously making a private reservation that he would execute none of them.

The king's dangerous illness had produced the most vivid alarm in Charles's mind. About a week after the arrival of the duchess, he despatched the Viceroy of Naples to visit Francis, and to present letters to the king and to Marguerite, whose speedy presence in Toledo De Lannoy was instructed to request. The emperor's letter of congratulation is wonderfully concise, considering the imminent danger which his captive had just escaped; its tenor is as follows:—

LETTER OF CHARLES V. TO THE KING.[1]

MONSIEUR MY BROTHER, — As I have not leisure to see you as often as I wish, I send my Viceroy of Naples to visit you; and I pray that through him you will send me word of your health, which I desire, and doubt not that you will soon recover, by the help of God, to whom he prays that it may be thus, who desires to remain

Your good brother and friend,

CHARLES.

It appears almost impossible to find language less gracious and encouraging than the above, addressed by the emperor to his suffering prisoner; yet the noblemen around Francis discovered in this frigid epistle a subject of congratulation and hope. The treasurer, Babou de la Bourdazière, in his despatch to Madame, dated "from Madrid, this first day of October," could not refrain from enclosing it, in order that Louisa might see "the gracious-

[1] Documents sur la Captivité de François I., No. 160.

ness of his (the emperor's) speech, and so assure herself that affairs would soon come to a happy termination by the good pleasure of God." [1]

Immediately after the viceroy departed, the Archbishop of Embrun and the President de Selve took leave of the king, and returned to Toledo, to prepare for Marguerite's reception in that city. The duchess was to depart for Toledo, on the 2d of October; for such was the impatience of the king to commit to her the conduct of the negotiation as to induce him to forego the pleasure of her society, even when still confined to his bed.

The Constable de Bourbon, meanwhile, arrived in Spain to watch the negotiations pending for the release of the king, in which event his own fate was so deeply involved. The emperor's promise to bestow upon him the hand of the queen dowager of Portugal, and to exact from Francis the cession of the territory comprehended within the limits of the ancient kingdom of Arles; and the offer once made by the king to reverse his attainder upon certain conditions, — were questions still under discussion. Yet, during the recent conferences at Toledo, the constable's claims no longer occupied a prominent place in the discussions between the ministers of France and Spain. Francis reiterated not his offer of bestowing the hand of the Princess Renée on his rebel subject; while the emperor kept his sister under the strictest *surveillance*, and suffered not the slightest intimacy between her and the constable. The unconcealed repugnance also of Charles's haughty sister to become the bride of a traitor, and of a prince, the vassal of the French crown, was another mortification to the ambitious Bourbon. Yet Queen Eleanor only participated in the feeling of universal execration with which Bourbon's crime was regarded by the Spanish people of all classes. The emperor's favour even could not insure for him a common degree of deference from the grandees of the court, whose sarcastic courtesies were as gall and wormwood to the proud spirit of the guilty Bourbon. The dislike of the Castilian nobility was so strongly manifested that it was with difficulty the constable procured a residence in Madrid suitable to his dignity, and the rank he was supposed to be about to hold at the imperial court. The emperor

[1] Lettre du Trésorier Babou à Madame la Régente, Docum. sur la Cap. de François I., No. 159.

was compelled to make it his personal request to the Marquis of Villana that he would suffer Bourbon to inhabit his palace. "I can refuse nothing that your imperial Majesty deigns to ask of me," replied the marquis; "the palace, therefore, is at the service of the Duke de Bourbon, as long as he may choose to occupy it; but when he quits it I will have it burned to the ground as a house polluted by the presence of a traitor, and unfit for the abode of any person of honour." [1]

Bourbon arrived in Madrid soon after the recovery of Francis. It is certain that he would then have gladly relinquished his claim to the hand of the queen dowager of Portugal, and with her his prospective chance of obtaining the crown of Arles, and his allegiance to the emperor, to obtain either Marguerite or the Princess Renée in marriage, and the restoration of his hereditary dominions. With the intent, therefore, of pressing his suit, or, as seems most probable, of praying Marguerite to intercede for the gracious pardon of his royal master, the Duke de Bourbon sent a message to the duchess, before she quitted Madrid, entreating to be admitted to an audience. To this petition Marguerite returned a cold and positive refusal, declining to meet the constable except publicly, as one of the courtiers of the emperor.[2]

All things were at length arranged for the departure of Marguerite for Toledo. With indescribable anxiety and interest the French watched the progress of her embassy. Her mission was a sacred one, — that of healing by her mediation the misfortunes which had befallen her country, and of restoring her brother's freedom, — yet there was besides something chivalrous in Marguerite's undertaking which captivated the fancy and enthusiasm of her countrymen. Strong in the affection she bore her brother, she shrank not from encountering the hostility of the imperial cabinet, or the insincerity and concealed opposition of the emperor himself. "Madame," wrote the secretary of state, Robertet, to the duchess, "your journey into Spain was predestined long ago, from the urgent need which everybody perceived that the king had of your presence there; and not only his Majesty, but the whole of Christendom besides. I assure you that the sole hope and trust that has sustained Madame in this great and intolerable misfortune and adversity,

[1] Brantôme. [2] Mezeray, Grande Histoire, Vie de François I.

has first centred in His aid, who has always disposed and will forever dispose of events according to His good pleasure, and afterwards in you." [1]

Cheered by the confidence reposed in her, and the interest which her journey inspired, Marguerite quitted Madrid on Monday, October 2. She was attended by an imposing suite of all the French nobles and gentlemen then in Spain, excepting Montmorency and Montpezat, who remained in attendance on the king. The duchess slept one night, on her road to Toledo, at the royal castle of Illescas.[2] She relates the incidents which had thus far befallen her in the following letter to her brother, written the same day that she bade him farewell: —

FROM THE DUCHESS D'ALENÇON TO THE KING.[3]

MONSEIGNEUR, — I could not content myself without writing to inquire how you feel this afternoon. I beg you therefore to command that I may be forthwith informed of the truth; also, whether your great hand [4] serves you as well as your little one [5] which has just quitted you so unwillingly; but I hope that my absence will do you service. Don Ugo,[6] whom the emperor has sent to escort me, just now said that he hoped I should have a prosperous journey, he being resolved to serve you, and the viceroy also, who is to-morrow to receive me. I found the Grand Master of Rhodes [7] sojourning in this place. He is very sorry that he cannot pay you a visit, nor yet accompany me; for he is constrained to remain here, awaiting the emperor's pleasure. Messieurs d'Ambrun and the first president will arrive here to-morrow by dinner-time: they come to inform me how they found affairs. I beseech you, monseigneur, be of good cheer, and be vexed at nothing; for I hope that He who has delivered you from death will finally give you such liberty that you will have double obligation to love and

[1] Docum. sur la Cap. de François I., No. 179. This obsequious courtier dates his letter, "Des piez de Madame, ce vii. d'Octobre."

[2] Illescas is fifteen miles from Madrid; it is situated exactly half-way between Madrid and Toledo.

[3] Docum. sur la Cap. de François I., 150. The learned editor of these MSS., M. Champollion Figeac, supposes that this letter was written by Marguerite at Barcelona; but its contents clearly prove it to have been composed subsequently to the king's illness, and when his sister quitted him for the first time afterwards.

[4] Montmorency.

[5] Marguerite alludes to herself.

[6] Don Ugo de Monçada.

[7] Jourdain de l'Isle Adam, the Grand Master of Rhodes, accompanied Marguerite to Barcelona, on board the galleys of Andrea Doria.

praise Him above all others; which thing I beseech Him to grant, and you also, monseigneur, I pray to hold me ever in your good grace, despite of Montmorency, who is jealous, though for him I shall never fail to remain

Your very humble and very obedient subject and sister,

MARGUERITE.

The following morning, Tuesday, October 3, the duchess set out from Illescas for Toledo. She was received with great pomp and ceremony, about three miles from the city, by the emperor in person, attended by the Archbishop of Toledo, Don Alonzo de Fonseca, Primate of Spain, the Viceroy of Naples, the Dukes of Alba, Infantado, Medina Céli, Bejar, and Naxara, the French ambassadors, and a brilliant cavalcade of nobles.[1] Marguerite travelled in a litter, surrounded by a guard of honour, under the command of Don Ugo de Monçada. She was accompanied by the Sénéchale of Poitou and by Madame de Silly. In her suite were the Bishop of Senlis, the Sénéchal of Poitou, M. de St. Gelais, the Archbishop of Embrun, the President de Selve, and many other noblemen who had generously volunteered to share the captivity of their king. The emperor approached the litter in which Marguerite reposed, cap in hand, and again addressed her in complimentary language and with most deferential manner.

The impracticable tenacity with which the emperor clung to his designs was never outwardly manifested by his deportment: always courteous and condescending, Charles excelled in the arts of conciliation, and left it to his ministers, who were admirably chosen for the purpose, to enforce the inexorable mandates his policy dictated. With the emperor riding beside her litter, and surrounded by the élite of the Spanish nobility, Marguerite made her entry into Toledo, and was thus escorted to the palace of Don Diego de Mendoza, Count de Mélito, a near kinsman of the Duke de Infantado, where lodgings were prepared for herself and her train.[2]

The emperor assisted Marguerite to alight from her litter, and remained afterwards in conference with her for two hours. It

[1] Compte rendu par Madame la régente au parlement de Paris de la première entrevue de Marguerite et de l'Empereur, Docum. sur la Cap. de François I., p. 342; Ferreras, Hist. de España, t. ix.; Sandoval, Hist. del Emperador Carlos V.

[2] Ferreras, Hist. de España.

was not a political discussion that detained Charles so long in the society of the graceful sister of his captive; for the preliminaries alone of their first interview were then arranged. The emperor appointed the following day to grant formal audience to the duchess for the unfolding of her mission. According to his previous agreement with Francis, none of the imperial ministers were to share in this important conference. Charles, however, determined to avail himself of this stipulation in its broadest sense, and he distinctly intimated to the duchess that any future colloquies they might have on political affairs must be holden privately between themselves alone. Somewhat startled at this announcement, Marguerite expostulated, as she considered such a course injurious to her dignity and reputation. Charles nevertheless declared himself inflexibly resolved on this point; and the only concession which the duchess obtained was permission that the lady who attended her to the door of the imperial cabinet might wait outside until the conference terminated.[1] Whether it was that a wish to enjoy the conversation of the duchess without the restraint of witnesses, prompted this strange whim of Charles, or, as is most probable, that the emperor, with his constitutional caution and insincerity, desired to be at liberty to disavow hereafter any promises which the aspect of his policy might then render advisable, — he strictly exacted these private interviews from Marguerite throughout her sojourn at his court. Marguerite afterwards, in several of her letters, indignantly alludes to this extraordinary proceeding on the part of the emperor, which she regarded as one of the chief grievances inflicted upon her during her residence in Spain.[2]

Marguerite's vivacity and grace charmed the Spanish courtiers. Adroit as well as fascinating, she had a flattering and appropriate word for each. Charles himself departed enchanted with Marguerite's sprightly wit, and perhaps regretting that it was no longer in his power to demand that fair hand, once offered as the ransom of the king. "The said emperor treated Madame la Duchesse with most courteous grace, and showed her greater marks of friendship and benignity than he had bestowed on

[1] Lettres de la Duchesse d'Alençon au Roi.

[2] Lettre de Marguerite à M. le Chancelier d'Alençon, Archives du Royaume, Suppl. au Trésor de Chartes.

any other princess before," wrote the Duchess d'Angoulême to the parliament, in her missive to the court, describing her daughter's reception at Toledo. Marguerite herself expresses satisfaction at the deportment of the emperor in the following letter, which she despatched to her brother on the morning after her arrival at the Spanish court: —

FROM THE DUCHESS D'ALENÇON TO THE KING.[1]

TOLEDO [Wednesday, October 4].

MONSEIGNEUR, — Last night I arrived at this place. The emperor gave me a courteous reception, and came to meet and escort me to this abode, since which he has entertained me with many fair and obliging words, expressing his contentment at your recovered health, and the hope he has of your friendship. By the counsel of the viceroy, I shall visit him to-day after dinner, and then we shall commence in good earnest to discuss the terms of your deliverance. He (the emperor) insists that we shall confer together alone in a room, though he permits one of my ladies to stand without at the door. This evening I will send you notice of what passes at our conference. I beseech you, monseigneur, to affect a feeble and ailing deportment while in the presence of the Sieur Alarçon,[2] as your weakness will hasten my negotiation; for I long, more than I can tell you, to see you free, which you soon will be, by the grace of God, and to return and try whether your little hand[3] can do nothing more to serve you. Awaiting which, I am going now to beseech Him who commanded St. François to build again His fallen church, to give you grace to be the person chosen to perfect this work, to the great gain and benefit of Christendom.

Your very humble and very obedient subject and sister,

MARGUERITE.

Marguerite's hint to her brother, not to appear to be too rapidly recovering his health while in the presence of his jailer, Alarçon, arose from her knowledge of the minuteness with which every action and gesture of the king was reported to the emperor. If the hopefulness of Francis increased, then Charles's obduracy of purpose augmented; if, on the contrary, the king's spirits became depressed, the emperor's eagerness to sign the

[1] Docum. sur la Captivité de François I., No. 167.

[2] Governor of the garrison of Madrid, and the officer specially appointed to guard the king.

[3] Marguerite frequently terms herself her brother's "little hand."

treaty, and to release his captive, seemed to exceed the haste manifested even by the ambassadors of Madame. It was a constant source of anxiety to Charles and his ministers lest Francis should die in captivity; but the odium of such an untoward event was less considered by them than the overthrow of their unscrupulous projects to increase the territorial limits of Spain by the dismemberment of the kingdom of France.

When Marguerite arrived at Toledo, the negotiation for the release of her brother had neither advanced nor varied from the original propositions submitted to the king by the Count de Rieux at Pizzighitone. Francis now refused, as then, with equal firmness to entertain or accept any one of them; the emperor avowed, with equal peremptoriness, his intention to detain the person of the king until those conditions were assented to under the sign manual of Francis and his ambassadors. On two points alone did there appear to exist a chance of compromise; or that either of the monarchs would recede from the articles as at first proposed. Charles no longer insisted upon making Bourbon a king, or of bestowing upon him the hand of the Queen of Portugal; while Francis ceased to permit the name of his sister, or of the Princess Renée, to be used by his ambassadors, even as a matter of policy, in conjunction with that of Bourbon. With almost unexampled pertinacity the emperor persisted in demanding the cession of Burgundy with its dependencies; and he forbore with a wiliness highly insulting and exasperating to the king, to give a decisive answer to his proposals for the hand of Eleanor. Charles seemed inclined sooner to increase than to modify the rigour of his demands; while the long and painful detention which Francis suffered had not subdued his courageous spirit. The powers of dissimulation evinced by Charles at the early age of twenty-five were surprising; always self-possessed, and seldom if ever yielding to the generosity or enthusiasm of youth, all his designs betrayed profound calculation. His excess of worldly prudence throughout his long reign eminently contributed to its almost unvarying prosperity; but Charles never knew the delights so constantly experienced by his generous but improvident rival in conferring favours; nor did he ever succeed in winning the almost idolatrous attachment which surrounded Francis.

Charles, meanwhile, had convoked the Cortès to meet at

Toledo. Ambassadors likewise arrived there from the principal powers of Europe. Henry VIII. of England sent the Bishop of London and Sir Robert Wingfield to represent him at these important conferences. The pope accredited the Cardinal Salviati as his nuncio, who was attended by four bishops; and envoys were nominated by Portugal, Poland, Venice, as also by the various Italian potentates, all vitally concerned in the treaty about to be negotiated. The ministers chosen by Marguerite to assist her in her arduous undertaking were the Archbishop of Embrun; the President de Selve; the High Treasurer Babou; De la Barre, Bailiff of Paris; the Bishop of Tarbes; and Bayard, who was afterwards secretary of state: subsequently, also, she was joined by Montmorency and Brion, after the return of the latter from France.[1]

The anxiety of the duchess, meanwhile, became intense as the period approached for her first interview with the emperor. The powers entrusted to her were unlimited, except for the cession of Burgundy, upon which point the king remained inexorable. On Wednesday, October 4, Marguerite proceeded to the imperial palace, where the emperor received her alone in his private cabinet, as had before been stipulated, while her lady remained without at the door awaiting the termination of the interview.[2] With all the grace and ingenuity she was mistress of, Marguerite opened her negotiation. First and principally, she demanded the hand of the Queen of Portugal for the king, particularly insisting on the urgent necessity of this alliance as the only possible foundation for the articles to be subsequently proposed. On condition of this marriage, the king was content to hold the duchy of Burgundy as the dowry conferred on Eleanor by her brother, and to render its succession hereditary to the male children which might be born to them. If the emperor demanded to be put into real and substantial possession of the province, the king offered to give hostages for the performance of this condition, provided that Charles, on taking possession of Burgundy, likewise gave the king hostages for its faithful surrender again to the crown of France, in case the court of parliament, in conjunction with the assembled chamber of peers,

[1] Docum. sur la Captivité de François I.; Journal des Itinéraires et Résidences de Charles Quint, tiré des papiers d'état du Cardinal de Granvelle.

[2] Lettre de la Duchesse d'Alençon au Roi, F. de Béth., No. 8651.

decreed, after a careful investigation of the conflicting claims of the two monarchs, that the duchy rightfully appertained to Francis. The emperor was likewise to bind himself to abide by the sentence pronounced by these arbiters, the parliament and peers of France. Secondly, Marguerite offered the perpetual renunciation of the rights possessed by the crown of France on the kingdom of Naples, the duchy of Milan, the kingdoms of Arragon and Valence, the county of Barcelona, and on the sovereignty of Genoa. She also consented to withdraw all pretensions to Tournay and its adjacent territory, and to restore the town of Hesdin to the emperor. The duchess proposed, also, to give Charles a discharge for the sum of 350,000 crowns, a debt contracted with the royal house of France by his grandfather, Ferdinand the Catholic. During the life of Charles and that of his direct successor, Francis consented, likewise, to waive the rights of the crown of Francis over the counties of Flanders and Artois; and as suzerain to dispense with the oath of fealty due to him from the emperor, the possessor of that territory. The articles concerning the King of England, and the restoration of the Duke de Bourbon to his hereditary patrimony, were to be maintained as proposed by the ambassadors. Marguerite furthermore offered, if the emperor declined to accept the above conditions, to pay any ransom that they should mutually agree upon for her brother's freedom; in which event Francis promised never to pursue his rights to the territories contested by the house of Hapsburg by force of arms, but to defer to the decision of judges and arbiters. This concession, however, was not to be considered as binding on the king's successors in the monarchy.[1]

The proposals of peace made by the Duchess d'Alençon differed very slightly from the terms before rejected by the emperor. The only points upon which she made concession, or exceeded the offers tendered by the ambassadors, were for the restoration of the town of Hesdin,[2] and the consent of Francis to submit

[1] Conférence de Madame la Duchesse d'Alençon avec l'empereur Charles Quint au sujet de la délivrance de son Frère, Docum. sur la Cap. de François I., No. 182.

[2] The cession of Hesdin is included in the terms of peace proposed by Francis to the emperor while at Pizzighitone; it was afterwards withdrawn in the instructions of Madame to her ambassadors.

his claims to the duchy of Burgundy to the arbitration of his parliament and peers.

The chief aim of Marguerite's embassy was to obtain the hand of Charles's sister for the king, with the nominal dowry of Burgundy, which would thus become inalienably incorporated, by the emperor's assent, with the crown of France. This marriage would likewise put a final check on the aspiring pretensions of the Duke de Bourbon; for though the emperor visibly receded from fulfilling the lavish promises made to Bourbon, yet by words he had never since given the French ambassadors reason to believe that he no longer cared to maintain the assertion made by his minister when writing to the regent, during the captivity of Francis in Italy, "that as to the marriage of the sister of the emperor to her son, Madame was not to think of it; for it was quite impossible to enter upon the negotiation, on account of the engagements subsisting between the emperor and Monseigneur de Bourbon; as nothing in the world could induce his Majesty to fail in those promises, in order not to lose the renown he had acquired of never breaking his word." [1]

Such stress had been laid both by Francis and his ambassadors on the advantages and almost certain peace likely to result from the embassy of the Duchess d'Alençon, that the emperor prepared himself to receive offers on the part of the French government amounting to little less than the adoption of his own terms. No proposal as yet made had so little chance of acceptance with Charles as that of submitting the claims he so tenaciously urged on the duchy of Burgundy to the arbitration of the French parliament and chamber of peers. He therefore listened to Marguerite's appeal with frigid composure, and abruptly put an end to the conference by telling the duchess that he would assemble his Council to consider her proposals, and inform her of the result on the morrow. "Monseigneur," wrote Marguerite to her brother,[2] "yesterday I went to visit the emperor. I found him very guarded and cold in his demeanour. He took me apart into his room, with one lady to await me; but when there, his discourse was not worth so great a ceremony, for he put me off, in order to confer with his Council, and will give me an answer to-day."

[1] Lettre de . . . (the signature of this letter cannot be deciphered) à Madame la Régente, Docum. sur la Cap. de François I., No. 84.

[2] Lettre de la Duchesse d'Alençon au Roi, F. de Béth., No. 8651, Bibl. Royale.

To put an effectual end to the conference, the emperor offered to conduct Marguerite to visit his sister, Queen Eleanor, whom she had not then seen. This interview was one of the greatest possible interest to the duchess; and chagrined and disappointed as she doubtless felt at the apparent ill success of her first political interview, it may be supposed how earnestly Marguerite, who knew her brother as herself, watched the words and deportment of the princess whose elevation to the throne of France formed the basis of her difficult negotiation. If the emperor persisted in bestowing his sister on the constable, it was little probable that he would withdraw those articles for the aggrandizement of Bourbon from the terms of peace which the king deemed amongst the most grievous of the concessions proposed to him at Pizzighitone. Marguerite relied greatly on the co-operation of the Queen of Portugal, whose secret dislike to espouse Bourbon was well known to her; her disappointment, therefore, was unbounded when she learned from the lips of Charles himself that Eleanor was on the eve of taking her departure from Toledo, on a pilgrimage to visit the shrine of the Holy Virgin at Guadalupe. The emperor foresaw the danger of permitting a free interchange of visits between Marguerite and his sister; especially as it had not yet been definitively decided in the Imperial Council, whether Eleanor's hand should be bestowed on the King of France, or on his rebel subject, the Duke de Bourbon. Fearful of the influence which Marguerite might obtain over his sister's mind, and well aware of Eleanor's repugnance to wed the constable, Charles decreed that these royal ladies should meet alone on the eve of the queen's departure, just early enough to exonerate the latter from the charge of treating Marguerite with discourtesy. Eleanor, like all her sisters, lived in profound submission to her brother's will; and however unpalatable his commands may have been, she was in the habit of yielding too implicit an obedience to make effectual resistance. Her previous marriage had been acquiesced in with tears, and with a heavy heart; nor was it now probable that she would dare refuse to unite her fate with that of Bourbon, if such proved to be the will of her puissant brother.

The Queen of Portugal, when her union with the king was solicited by Marguerite, had completed her twenty-seventh year.

She had calm, expressive features, eyes of a pale-blue colour, and an abundance of soft fair hair, which was her principal charm. Her face was full, and rather pale; her complexion lacked the brilliant colouring of youth; and her figure and deportment, though majestic, possessed not the grace which distinguished that of the Duchess d'Alençon. Eleanor's disposition was grave, and inclined even to melancholy; she possessed not a particle of Marguerite's wit and fascination of manner, gifts exercising such powerful influence over the mind of Francis. Her conduct, however, both as a woman and a queen, had been irreproachable. She was devout, sensitive, and ambitious; and from the date of her union with Emmanuel of Portugal, never forgot the *prestige* attached to her high rank as the eldest sister of the mighty Charles, and a princess of the House of Hapsburg.

"The emperor took me to see the queen, his sister," writes Marguerite to her brother.[1] "I stayed very late; and in the evening I went to visit her again, when she conversed in a most friendly and pleasant manner. It is too true that she (Eleanor) sets out on her journey to-morrow. Before her departure I shall go again to take leave of her. I believe that she acts thus out of obedience, more than in compliance with her own will, for they hold her in great subjection." Marguerite was determined to make the most of her opportunities of intercourse with Eleanor; in whose heart she strove to kindle — and apparently not without success — a warm interest in the fate of Francis; as the queen contributed not a little, by her earnest importunities, to the ultimate issue of the negotiation.

Whilst Marguerite was thus amicably engaged with the emperor and his sister, a violent altercation occurred between the French ambassadors — De Selve, the Archbishop of Embrun, and the treasurer, Babou — and the Imperial Council of State. It appears that during Marguerite's audience with the emperor the most influential members of his Privy Council, the Viceroy of Naples, the Count de Nassau, the Chancellor Gattinara, the grand master of the imperial household, and Don Ugo de Monçada, met the French ambassadors, to receive a simultaneous report of the terms being then proposed by the Duchess d'Alençon to their master. Charles's ministers, when they were in-

[1] Lettre de la Duchesse d'Alençon au Roi, MS. Bibl. Roy., F. de Béth., No. 8651.

formed of the trifling concessions proposed by the duchess in addition to the articles already discussed until every argument was exhausted, were far from submitting to the disappointment with the equanimity of temper displayed by their imperial master. They replied to the ambassadors in language of indignant displeasure; and even added menaces of the most threatening description.[1] The emperor, they stated, was resolved to obtain the restoration of his rights before setting the French king at liberty; that Burgundy was the house from which he maternally descended, and of which he was the undoubted chief and heir, besides being sovereign of its famed Order of the Golden Fleece. If justice were refused the emperor, they added, and that the restoration of his rights could not be obtained by the medium of negotiation, their master was powerful enough to exact and enforce restitution of the province so long usurped by the French kings. The President de Selve and his colleagues replied with much moderation and prudence to the intemperate language used towards them, strangely enough, for the first time, when they were no longer the responsible ministers of the king, all power having been transferred from them to the Duchess d'Alençon. It was provoking, it must be owned, to the emperor's ministers, after wearisome months of public debate, and tedious investigations into the genealogical descent of every individual of the house of Burgundy, their charters, rights, and feudal tenure, to find themselves as far as ever from the settlement of the great point of dispute between the crowns of France and Spain. The embassy of the Duchess d'Alençon seemed to them, therefore, futile, and even a positive evil, as much time had been lost, and all negotiation suspended until her arrival; while, after all, it appeared that she trusted alone to her personal mediation to induce the emperor to forego rights which they had emphatically assured the ambassadors "that he would not yield in favour of the marriage of sister or niece whatever."

The temper and forbearance displayed by the French ambassadors at length made Charles's ministers ashamed of their violence; and in more conciliating language they proceeded to explain the policy it was intended to pursue towards the king. The conference, nevertheless, continued in a strain of bitter

[1] Lettre du Trésorier Babou, au Maréchal de Montmorency, Docum. sur la Cap. de François I., No. 168.

acrimony. Charles's counsellors bade the French ambassadors note the evident disunion subsisting between Madame and the parliament of Paris; and the dissensions of the French princes, who, they averred, favoured the emperor's designs by their want of unanimity and their mutual jealousy.[1] The ambassadors, on the other hand, failed not to remind the Council of the unfavourable state of the emperor's affairs in Italy and in Germany; of the menaced invasion of Hungary by Soliman and his Turkish hosts; and of the daily increasing strength of the formidable league formed between the Regent of France, the King of England, the pope, and the Venetians, for the rescue of the king and the cause of Italian independence. After some further discourse, the Council separated without resolving upon anything; but the hostility of the emperor's ministers, and the purport of the advice they would tender to their royal master was so apparent that the French ambassadors hastened to seek audience of the Duchess d'Alençon to impart their apprehensions.

This news greatly increased Marguerite's uneasiness; she felt indignant also that the Imperial Council should have presumed so arrogantly to negative her propositions, without waiting to ascertain the pleasure of the emperor, — a want of respect much at variance with Charles's assiduous courtesies.

Marguerite visited the Queen of Portugal in the evening, and remained with her until very late, being entertained, as the duchess informed her brother, "with most courteous discourse." The French ambassadors unanimously render testimony to the good-will invariably displayed towards them by Eleanor, and her anxiety to promote the interests of Francis. She was, perhaps, weary of the obedience exacted by her brother, who even, it is stated, carried his fraternal *surveillance* to the extent of busying himself with the education of the little infanta, her daughter, who was then about four years old. Eleanor, however, occupied a very prominent position at the Spanish court; she had just negotiated the marriage of her brother with Isabel of Portugal, her beautiful step-daughter, and in many things had acquired great influence over the emperor, though, as the Duchess d'Alençon observes, she was "*fort subjecte*" to his will.

When Marguerite returned from paying this visit she found a

[1] Rapport fait au parlement de Paris, par le Trésorier Ph. Babou, sur la santé du Roi, Docum. sur la Cap. du Roi François, No. 211.

messenger from one of the emperor's principal ministers awaiting her, — probably sent by the Viceroy of Naples, — who informed her privately, as he had been commanded, that the emperor was highly dissatisfied with the articles of peace proposed; but if she offered to him, in addition, the cession of the viscounty of Auxerre and the district of St. Laurent, both appendages of the duchy of Burgundy, and, moreover, a further sum in golden crowns, there was little doubt that Charles and his Council would favourably receive such terms. Overjoyed beyond measure that the emperor, contrary to her expectation, expressed willingness to relax in his demands, Marguerite caused the Archbishop of Embrun and the President de Selve to be summoned, and forthwith despatched them to wait on the emperor, to offer for the ransom of her brother the cession of Naples, Milan, Genoa, Tournay, the suzerainty of Flanders and Artois, Hesdin, the viscounty of Auxerre, the district of St. Laurent, and a further sum of 50,000 golden crowns, with the fulfilment of the minor clauses contained in the treaty which she had presented during her audience. The emperor received the ambassadors with much courtesy and mildness, and when they had explained their errand, he replied "that as Madame la Duchesse d'Alençon augmented her offers, he should lessen and diminish his demands."[1]

These encouraging words renewed the hopes of Marguerite, and of the French ambassadors. It had also been reported to the duchess that the emperor declared "that, if she finally resolved to make some notable offer for the deliverance of the king, he, on his part, would do something, out of the respect and love he entertained for her, which would afford her marvellous astonishment."[2] It is impossible to divine whether the emperor ever sincerely designed to give effect to these words; or whether, in accordance with the policy which directed his measures, he wished to elicit, by the threats of his Council to the ambassadors, and by his own flattering speeches to Marguerite, the utmost extent of the concessions the duchess was authorized to make; certain, however, it is, that during the night of Wednesday, October 4, some untoward event occurred to overthrow his placable intentions towards Francis.

Early on the following morning Marguerite paid a third

[1] Protestation du Roi contre le Traité de Madrid, Docum. sur la Cap. de François I., No. 222. [2] Ibid.

visit to the Queen of Portugal. Being aware of the emperor's umbrage at these visits, the duchess, perhaps, bestowed more attention upon Eleanor than was strictly politic — especially as she conversed privately with the queen; but Marguerite's anxiety for her brother was too intense to permit her to neglect any present opportunity of serving him. The emperor manifested extreme displeasure when informed by his officious ministers of Marguerite's conferences with his sister; and the more so, perhaps, as, encouraged by the representations of the duchess, Eleanor ventured to address bolder remonstrances to him on the eventual disposal of her hand. Whatever might have been the degree of Charles's disapprobation, or the motives that influenced his decision, it was undoubtedly resolved by the Council, with the emperor's sanction, on the evening or during the night of the 4th of October, to despatch the Queen of Portugal, without delay, on her pious pilgrimage to Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, and to adhere with inflexible determination to the one great condition before proposed for the king's release, — the cession of Burgundy to the crown of Spain.

Whilst the Duchess d'Alençon was still conversing with Queen Eleanor, the Viceroy of Naples entered the apartment, for the double purpose of abridging their interview and of conducting Marguerite into the presence of the emperor, to hear his decision on the articles of peace she had submitted on the previous day. Followed, as before, by one lady only, Marguerite entered the chamber where Charles awaited to grant her audience. "While I was speaking to the queen, the viceroy came to attend me to the presence of the emperor," said Marguerite, in the letter to her brother so often quoted, and in which she gives him an account of the vexatious position of affairs.[1] "He took me apart into his cabinet, and there he informed me that he greatly desired your deliverance and perfect friendship, and therefore he demurs about accepting judgment as to the matter of Burgundy; that is to say, that he refuses to accept as judges your peers of France and the court of parliament. He desires that the affair should be decided by arbitration, and has requested me to put down in writing proposals to that end, while he, on his part, will command his Council to find a way to adjust all differences, and that to-morrow and Saturday the

[1] Lettre de la Duchesse d'Alençon au Roi, MS. Bibl. Roy., F. de Béth., No. 8651.

ministers on both sides shall meet to debate the matter. Afterwards he wishes again to see me; and assures me, if our people cannot agree, that he will then do something of his own accord which shall give me great satisfaction. Therefore, monseigneur, I shall be obliged to remain here over Saturday; but I send you some one who will relate to you what has been done here each day, in order that, before we proceed further in the matter, you may be aware of their subtle devices. Nevertheless, I know they are in great dread lest I should become weary; for I give them clearly to understand that unless they act better it is my intention to depart forthwith."

Marguerite's indignation was now thoroughly roused; the "subtle devices" of the Imperial Council did not for one instant deceive her; and from the commencement of her negotiation she perceived Charles's insincerity of purpose, and acted accordingly. Resolved, however, to concede patiently to every one of their reasonable demands, she assented to the emperor's request that she would send her proposals in writing to the Privy Council, and retired from Charles's presence for that purpose. Queen Eleanor, meantime, received an order from her brother to quit Toledo without delay, and proceed to Talavera, accompanied by the bishops of Cuba and of the Canary Isles, from whence she was at liberty to journey to Guadalupe as best suited her convenience.[1] The emperor's command was too peremptory for Eleanor to venture to seek even a parting interview with the Duchess d'Alençon: she, however, wrote to excuse herself for this omission; but the queen's letter, written under restraint, seems to have been as little pleasing to Marguerite as the rest of the treatment she was experiencing at the Spanish court.

The following day, Friday, October 6, the French ambassadors and certain members of the Imperial Council, nominated by the emperor, met in conference. Marguerite's summary of the concessions she was empowered to make for her brother's release is written with vigour and firmness. This document was delivered by the President de Selve, who in return received from the viceroy the terms upon which the emperor consented to grant freedom to his captive. The duchy of Burgundy was still

[1] Protestation du Roi, contre le Traité de Madrid, Docum. sur la Cap. de François I., No. 222.

peremptorily demanded; in addition to which, the emperor was not ashamed to add the cession of the viscounty of Auxerre and the district of St. Laurent, territories Marguerite had been persuaded to tender, under the impression that Charles meant to withdraw his claim to the duchy. The renunciation of the county of Aost, the ancient patrimony of the house of Orleans, was, moreover, exacted by the grasping and ungenerous policy of the Spanish Council.[1] During the remainder of the day and the whole of the following one, the ambassadors and the emperor's ministers debated, in order to arrive at some compromise which might afford a glimmer of hope for the ultimate ratification of peace. The affair of the duchy, the unfortunate and perpetual obstacle in the way of all accommodation, had been so frequently argued in every possible shape and fashion that nothing new was elicited from the laboured speeches uttered on both sides of the question, save a more express declaration of the imperial will to assume the ducal crown of Burgundy, and a yet more emphatic denial of that right by the king's ambassadors. Indignant beyond measure, Marguerite, whose spirit never quailed before the power and the aggressions of the emperor, remained steadily aloof during the progress of these negotiations. On the evening of the first day of the conferences she received a visit from the Viceroy of Naples, who seems to have sincerely lamented the measures so unexpectedly adopted by the Council, in which the enemies of France preponderated. On the following day the duchess wrote to the king to inform him of the continued hostility of the cabinet: her letter is written throughout in very indignant strains. Marguerite's anger must have been strongly roused when she omitted to lavish upon her brother those expressions of tender affection which abound in all her letters. She wrote as follows: —

The Duchess d'Alençon to the King.

Monseigneur, — If I have not written to you sooner, it is from my earnest desire to send you news of better things than I have as yet heard or seen here; but, considering the length of time that they detain me, and their formalities, I am determined to see the emperor this afternoon, and demand a final conclusion to the affair; then I will not fail to send you notice.

[1] Les Moyens de Paix baillés par le Conseil de l'empereur à M. la Duchesse d'Alençon, Docum. sur la Cap. de François I., No. 182.

Monseigneur, the viceroy came to visit me last night, and expressed much concern at not being able to render you the service he desires; and to tell you my private opinion, I think that they all seem much disturbed. I spoke to him in language of sorrow and contempt at their proceedings, expressing my indignation at the letter which I received from the queen, and at the emperor, who has not sought me for these two days past, so far as to tell him my opinion that they all displayed little honour and a great deal of bad will. I said, also, that I perceived that my presence was embarrassing to them, as they wished to satisfy me without making any reasonable concessions; but that I begged them to put aside such useless dissimulation, and tell me frankly their final resolutions: in all which discourse the viceroy agreed with me. I shall see what they do this morning, and according to their decision so I intend to speak; and this evening I will write to you. I assure you, monseigneur, that in the society of such unreasonable people I find the office of soliciting a more painful one than I did that of physician while watching by your side.

Your very humble and very obedient sister,

MARGUERITE.[1]

Marguerite's spirited expostulation to the viceroy, and through him indirectly to the Privy Council, must have been alluded to by Brantôme when he states that the duchess obtained permission to plead her brother's cause before the Council of State. No authentic narrative of any such event exists; indeed, throughout her negotiation, Marguerite steadily refused to treat for her brother's release except with the emperor in person. She considered any other course an infringement on her dignity, and expressly states it in one of her letters. Speaking of Marguerite's interviews with the emperor, Brantôme says: "She spoke so bravely and yet so courteously to the emperor upon his bad treatment of the king her brother, that he was quite overpowered; she showed him his ingratitude, and the felony of which he was guilty towards his suzerain on account of Flanders. She reproached him for the hardness of his heart, to be so little merciful towards so great and good a king; and that to demean himself after such fashion was not the way to gain a noble and royal heart like that of the king her brother, who, even if he died from the rigorous treatment inflicted upon him, still his death would not remain unavenged, he having children

[1] Docum. sur la Captivité de François I., No. 170.

who one day would exact signal retribution. And if she spoke so boldly to the emperor," continues Brantôme, "she said worse things still to his Council, before which she obtained audience; but there again she triumphed by her pleasant speech and fine harangue, spoken with the grace she excelled in; and she managed so well with her skilful words as to render herself more agreeable than odious and troublesome, being, moreover, beautiful, young, the widow of M. d'Alençon, and in the flower of her age, — all these qualities being very efficacious in moving and bending hard and cruel persons. She said at length so much, and her reasons were found so good and pertinent, that she remained in great esteem with the emperor, and with his Council and court." [1]

It does not appear that Marguerite obtained the audience with the emperor to which she alludes in her letter to her brother, if indeed she solicited it. She had still to experience more poignantly the effects "of the little honour, but great ill-will displayed by Charles and his Council," with which she reproached the viceroy. The conference between the ambassadors and the imperial ministers terminated on Saturday, October 7; and when Marguerite received their report she found it adverse to her brother's interests. The emperor, by the advice of his Council, steadily rejected the accommodation tendered by Marguerite; he insisted on receiving immediate and military possession of the duchy of Burgundy, and refused his assent to the marriage between his sister and the king, while demanding the betrothment of Eleanor's daughter, the infanta Mary, with the dauphin.[2]

Terms so arbitrary and impossible of accomplishment Marguerite and the ambassadors had no power to grant: the cessions demanded by the emperor for himself and for Bourbon would have wrested a third of France from under the sceptre of the House of Valois. It was determined, at length, by Marguerite and her faithful Council, to despatch the Archbishop of Embrun and the Treasurer Babou, to Madrid on the following Monday to bear these evil tidings to the king, and to request explicit instructions for their guidance. Marguerite then, in order signally to manifest her deep displeasure, quitted the palace assigned by the

[1] Brantôme, Dames Illustres, Vie de Marguerite de Valois.

[2] Moyens de Paix baillés par le conseil de l'empereur à M. la Duchesse d'Alençon, Docum. sur la Captivité de François I., No. 182.

emperor for her residence, and retired into the nunnery of Nuestra Señora de Carmel. Here Marguerite declared it to be her intention to remain in the strictest retirement until after the return of the ambassadors from Madrid. It would seem, nevertheless, from a hurried note written to Montmorency by the duchess, from the convent, on Sunday, — the day the ambassadors were employed in arranging their reports, previous to their departure for Madrid, — that she had not quite lost faith in the emperor's promises, despite the vexatious nature of the demands recently presented. After congratulating Montmorency on the progress the king's health was making, the duchess says: "With regard to the affair which brought me here, the most encouraging point about it that I have yet seen is the gracious assurance of the emperor that he will yet do things that will astonish me, and give me repose." Charles ever softened the effect of the harsh decisions of his cabinet by a courteous and encouraging private expression of personal good-will; where he was all-omnipotent, he yet, on most occasions, pretended submission to the dictum of his Council. Yet such was the art Charles possessed of stating his royal pleasure in a few emphatic words spoken with indifference, and such the displeasure he ever evinced against those who opposed or acted contrary to him — a displeasure more keenly felt by the culprit than visible to others — that few of his ministers, after the attentive study of the mood in which their imperial master presided at the Council, cared to opine contrary to what the emperor indicated rather than proposed.

Marguerite's prompt retreat afforded no little astonishment to the emperor. She had not even deigned to remonstrate with him, or sought by her personal mediation to induce him to moderate the rigour of the demands made by his Council; neither had she attempted to propitiate unduly any of the noblemen most favoured by his notice. Resolved to confer no more until she received instructions from Francis, the duchess retained with her the President de Selve and the Bishop of Senlis to receive any communications from the Council during the absence of the other ambassadors at Madrid. The Marshal de Montmorency was the ordinary channel of communication between the king and his ambassadors: to him, therefore, the President de Selve wrote thus: —

LETTER OF THE PRESIDENT DE SELVE TO THE MARSHAL DE MONTMORENCY.

TOLEDO [Monday], Oct. 9, 1525.

MONSEIGNEUR, — By MM. d'Ambrun and de la Bourdaizière you will learn the cause of their journey to see the king. Madame la duchesse was of opinion that I ought to remain here, to answer any questions that might arise during their absence; for my said lady the duchess is determined to hold the least possible discourse with the emperor's ministers, on account of their changeableness and inconstancy. She fears above all things that the king will be sorrowful at the difficulties raised, and she prays you to listen attentively to the reasons and discourse of the said lords of Ambrun and de la Bourdaizière, that you may revive the king's hopes of an honourable and speedy deliverance, as perhaps the final settlement is only delayed to make its result more sure and certain. This she has charged me to write to you. I assure you that she is performing here rather the offices of a brother to the king than any a sister might be expected to render. Commending myself to your favour, I pray the blessed Creator to bestow upon you His grace, peace, and love.

Your humble servant,

JEHAN DE SELVE.[1]

From Toledo, this 9th day of October, 1525.

Marguerite's affection for her brother never relaxed; the pure and self-denying love she felt for him nerved her to encounter difficulties to do him service from which otherwise she would have recoiled, while it augmented her perseverance and ingenuity. Those historians who ascribe unworthy motives for the intense attachment ever manifested by Marguerite for her brother, tracing it to her love of power and her ambition, judge most unfairly of a devotion which never swerved in its object, nor diminished in its spirit of self-sacrifice.

Marguerite's dignified retreat greatly embarrassed and annoyed the emperor; the total suspension of the negotiations was not what he desired; and yet to renew relations with the duchess, after the peremptory ultimatum given to her by his directions, without it having been first sought by herself, was a concession he was unwilling to make. Safe in the retreat of her convent, Marguerite, however, refused audience to every one, except to her brother's ambassadors. The Viceroy of Naples,

[1] Docum. sur la Cap. de François I., No. 180.

therefore, with whom she was on very amicable terms, aware of the emperor's desire, sent Marguerite a message of remonstrance, assuring her that she was inflicting injury on her brother's cause by thus holding herself aloof, and advising her by all means to petition the emperor to grant her immediate audience. The haughty spirit of Marguerite's race was roused within her when she heard herself thus admonished to ask, as a favour from the emperor, for that courteous attention and deference which she expected to receive from him as his equal in birth and lineage. Sending for the Bishop of Senlis, the duchess despatched him with the following reply to the viceroy: "That she had never yet quitted her lodging unsolicited; therefore, when the emperor chose to send to request her presence, she would be found at the convent."[1] She also further commanded the bishop to inform the viceroy, that the reason of her sojourn in the nunnery was "to give notable evidence to every one that if she did not confer with the emperor, her rank was too exalted to permit her to court and tamper with the servants of a master who had promised the king that she should treat with himself alone."[2]

Marguerite's attitude and reserve at this period offer signal contradiction of the assertion which had been hazarded,[3] "that her embassy into Spain had the reverse of a good and laudable motive; as it was undertaken by the duchess for the express purpose of obtaining by the power of her charms those fortunate results which could not be expected from her diplomatic ability." Every document which had been preserved relating to Marguerite's embassy proves, on the contrary, that throughout her sojourn at the court of Toledo her deportment was remarkable for its dignity and decision; and that, while she used every legitimate device to propitiate the friendship of the emperor, she never forgot her own lofty rank as a daughter of France.

The response sent by the duchess to the viceroy's message increased the apprehensions of the emperor, lest she should abruptly take leave and return to Madrid. The anxiety felt by Charles was revealed, perhaps intentionally, by some of his courtiers to the Bishop of Senlis and the Sénéchal of Poitou who communicated the news to Marguerite. This intelligence,

[1] Lettre de la Duchesse d'Alençon au Roi, Docum. sur la Cap. de François I., No. 181.

[2] Ibid.

[3] By M. de Fontanion and others.

of course, only made the duchess persist more firmly in holding herself aloof; especially when she discovered, also, that some of the nobles of the imperial court were paying assiduous *devoirs* to her two ladies of honour, to induce them to influence her to assume a more humble attitude towards the emperor. Madame de Silly gave Marguerite material assistance at this period; and in some way, we are told, by her skilful intrigue rendered essential service to the king.

On the day following the departure of the Archbishop of Embrun for Madrid, Marguerite wrote an amusing detail to her brother of the emperor's efforts to propitiate and draw her from her retirement. The duchess tells her own story with great point and spirit; and her angry impatience at Charles's insincerity and delay transpires in every phrase she writes at this period. "Every one tells me that he loves the king, but my experience of it is small!" she wrote with indignant earnestness to Montmorency, who was to present her letter to the king.[1] "Mon cousin, whatever pretences they make, they are so confounded that they know not what to say," continues the duchess. "I only dread their dilatoriness; but say to the king, when you present my letter, that I find their vagaries so pitiful that they even give me hope. I assure you, if I had to deal with people of worth, who understood what honour meant, I should not mind. The chief thing that we have to care about, however, is the king's health; and while God preserves it to him, do not fear to temporize a little, as it is nothing to make a journey to Madrid and back again here; for I trust that they will think better ere long, and lay aside their dissimulation. Believe me, they have a strange kind of chancellor here.[2] Altogether, their threats are so feeble that they sooner inspire me with hope than with fear; for after seeing what I have seen, I find things worse than I imagined, not so much for ourselves as for them. You will read to the king the letter that I have written to him, and this one also; and assure him that on Saturday and Sunday, days on which I did nothing, I never stirred from this convent, for in that wherein men fail God is steadfast."

[1] Lettre de la Duchesse d'Alençon au Maréchal de Montmorency, MS. Bibl. Roy., F. de Béth., No. 8507.

[2] The Chancellor Gattinara, who always protested against the extortionate demands of the emperor's Council, and finally refused to seal the treaty exacted from the King of France.

Marguerite wrote thus to the king:—

THE DUCHESS D'ALENÇON TO THE KING.

TOLEDO [Tuesday, Oct. 10], 1525.

MONSEIGNEUR, — You will now have heard by MM. d'Embrun and Babou the terms that they offer to you here, which bear little resemblance to the letters and fair words Veré[1] brought to you from his master, as you will learn from them in detail. Since the departure of your ambassadors the viceroy sent me word that, in his opinion, I ought to seek another audience of the emperor; but I replied, through M. de Senlis, that I had never quitted my lodging unsolicited, and when it pleased the emperor to ask for my presence, I was to be found in this convent, where I have remained from one o'clock to this hour of five without receiving any reply or notice from them.

During these past three days I have scarcely quitted the nunnery; and I sent word to the viceroy that I did so on purpose to give notable evidence to every one that, if I confer not with the emperor, my rank is too exalted to permit me to court or to tamper with the servants of a master who promised you that I should speak with himself alone on your affairs. I shall hear this evening what they intend to do; and to-morrow, when I know what your commandment is, I will do my utmost to obey. I assure you, monseigneur, they are much embarrassed what to do; and judging by their language to-day to sénéchal[2] and to Senlis, they fear much that I should take my leave; therefore, it appears to me, if we continue to carry things with a high hand, we shall constrain them to lower their tone. At all events, by the grace of God we will contrive your deliverance; but I beseech you, as they demean themselves so infamously (*infamement*), do not tire at the delay if only at last we attain the end so greatly desired by

Your very humble and very obedient sister,

MARGUERITE.[3]

[1] Veré, a gentleman of the chamber to the emperor, and his usual ambassador to inquire after the health of Francis.

[2] The Sénéchal of Poitou.

[3] Docum. sur la Cap. de François I., No. 181.

CHAPTER XII.

THE ambassadors, on their arrival at Madrid, found the king convalescent, able to rise from his bed, and sit at table while his officers served him at meals. The presence of Marguerite inspired the king with new life; his confidence in her devotion and abilities was unwavering, and he feared not to match her against the hostile Council at Toledo. Marguerite's friend, Montmorency, shared in the sanguine hopes of his royal master; indeed, all the attendants of Francis greeted Madame Marguerite, as they familiarly called the duchess, as one endowed with superhuman ability and power to accomplish the king's release.

The king, since his sister's departure for Toledo, had twice received news from Madame. Brion, likewise, had been despatched by the regent to bear intelligence of great political import to Francis, of the approaching ratification by the parliament of the peace which she had so skilfully negotiated with Henry VIII. of England. The progress of disaffection to the imperial cause also was gaining ground in Italy. The pope, the Venetians, the Florentines, and the King of England had combined with the Regent of France to promote the cause of Italian independence. This conspiracy was concerted and conducted by Morone, chancellor of Sforza, Duke of Milan; the Marquis of Pescara was even at first lured from his allegiance to the emperor by the brilliant offer of the diadem of Naples.[1]

The secret of this formidable league, which awaited only the formal adherence of Pescara to declare itself, was intrusted by the regent to Brion, that he might impart it to the king. This improved position of affairs at home and abroad was a source

[1] Gailliard, Vie de François I.; Mezeray; Brantôme, Vie du Marquis de Pescaire.

of just pride and congratulation to Louisa, who affectionately admonished her son to take present regard alone for his health and spirits, and to rely on the "faith and love of a mother who, when you, monseigneur, are concerned, knows no sinking of heart."[1] "Monseigneur," writes the indefatigable duchess in another letter, "you perceive that all your affairs are in good order as can be during the sad necessity of your absence; nevertheless you must, if it pleases you, adhere firmly to the principal point, which is your deliverance; for to say nothing of the desire of those who love you to see you again, the necessity of your presence here is so great that it is impossible to be sufficiently urgent, as Brion will tell you. Monseigneur, I cannot express to you how necessary to me was the arrival of the messenger with the news of your recovery. Recently, again, I have been rejoiced by a confirmation of this your amendment by the prothonotary of Armagnac, who informs me that every day you are gaining flesh, and also that you have despatched *votre mignonne* to Toledo, which has given me infinite gladness and content."[2]

The ambassadors took only one day to make the journey to Madrid. Francis, whose hopes had risen by the report of Madame on the favourable condition of his affairs, granted them immediate audience. Eagerly he inquired whether they appeared before him commissioned by his sister, by her —

> La sœur de veue tant desirée,
> Que de nous se peult dire l'aymeé
> Parfaitement, si jamais créature
> Le merita par sens, et par nature.[3]

The Archbishop of Embrun replied in the affirmative; and after delivering the letters sent by the duchess, he placed in the king's hands the articles on the acceptance of which depended his freedom. It was a bitter moment for Francis; again were the terms proposed to him which he had repeatedly rejected; and Marguerite's negotiation had produced but the reiteration of the demands which he had so indignantly denied the emperor while at Pizzighitone, when Italy, even Europe itself, seemed prostrate

[1] Lettre de la Duchesse d'Angoulême au Roi, Docum. sur la Cap. de François I., No. 148.

[2] Ibid., No. 123.

[3] Epître de François I. à Madame la Duchesse d'Angoulême.

at the feet of the conqueror of Pavia. The kingly spirit of Francis rose to repel this persevering exaction; for, not content with the pre-eminence acquired by his victory, Charles ungenerously sought to humble him in the eyes of his subjects; to compel him to falsify his coronation oath, and to dismember the realm of France until the sceptre of the Valois became that of a monarch of second-rate power and influence in Europe. Rather than relinquish the rights of the crown, and degrade France from her proud eminence, Francis preferred to die a prisoner. His firm resistance to the emperor's aggressions challenged the admiration and respect of his own subjects, and of the Spaniards. The emperor alone, absorbed by his selfish calculation how to turn the victory of Pavia to the best advantage, regarded the heroism displayed by Francis only as it bore upon the questions eagerly disputed in his council. Ill and enfeebled as he was, the king undertook the task of replying, in his own hand, to each one of the various clauses of the treaty brought by his ambassadors; and every observation made by Francis bears testimony to the dauntless spirit still actuating him, despite his long imprisonment. The second clause in the treaty demanded by the emperor set forth: "That in order to establish peace on the most solid basis possible, the marriage of madame Marie, infanta of Portugal, and niece of the emperor, with M. le dauphin, shall be forthwith negotiated on conditions hereafter to be proposed."

The king wrote in reply, beneath: "If nothing is said respecting the marriage for myself which offers at present, that of my son will be of long expectation." The third article stated: "That the King of France, for his deliverance, and for the better preservation of peace, shall restore to the emperor the duchy of Burgundy, the viscounty of Auxonne, and the district of St. Laurens, together with the counties of Maçonnois, Auxerrois, La Brie, and Bar-sur-Seine, with all their appendages, as held and possessed by the late Monseigneur Charles, Duc de Bourgogne. After restitution made, if the very Christian king still insists on his right to the said duchy, and other territories, as described above, his claim shall be decided by arbiters mutually chosen." To this the king replied: "I think it marvellously strange that in order to attain a happy peace this article should have been inserted, considering the offers that I have already made, which

are of such magnitude as to balance, equalize, and even totally abolish it. In drawing it, the cream of the articles presented to me by Beaurein,[1] and those made by the Marshal de Montmorency, has been taken, though each notoriously were devised to meet different contingencies. The judgment respecting Burgundy can only be given by lawful judges, as it has been proved and argued by my ambassadors, and to all which sufficient and satisfactory reply has not been made." The king made the following contemptuous note on the stipulation respecting the Duke de Bourbon: "As for Le Bourbon, when it shall please the emperor to have pity on him, I am content to give him restitution of his property, out of friendship for the said lord the emperor, and for no other cause." Another clause in the treaty stipulated that "the king should entirely abandon Don Henri d'Albret, the Duke of Guelders, Don Ulric, Duke of Wurtemburg, Messire Robert de la Marck and his children, and all the rebel vassals of the emperor, and promise never to aid them directly or indirectly, nor to accept their services or assistance in any way whatever." To this article Francis nobly responded: "I should think it strange for the emperor to put faith in my promises to him, if I failed in what I owe to those who have rendered me service, and to whom I am under obligations. I understand and accept this article, therefore, in its most reasonable sense, which is, that I will render no favour nor assistance to the above-mentioned personages in any designs tending to the emperor's disadvantage; for in him I desire to place my chief friendship." The king likewise refused the cession of the county of Ast, part of the patrimony of the house of Orleans.[2]

With an energy arising from the excitement of the moment, Francis had prepared his answers of indignant refusal to the demands of the emperor within a few hours after the arrival of his ambassadors at Madrid. Prolonged detention the king could patiently submit to; but a surrender of the sacred rights of his crown he courageously resolved to resist. Neither was there found one of the king's faithful servants who did not applaud this magnanimous resolve, though they mourned a decision which seemed indefinitely to prolong their master's captivity.

[1] Adrien de Croye, Count de Reux.

[2] Réponse faite par le Roi aux articles qui ont été baillés à ses ambassadeurs par les gens du conseil de l'empereur, Docum. sur la Cap. de François I., No. 182.

The king also wrote the following manly letter to the emperor: —

LETTER OF THE KING TO THE EMPEROR CHARLES V.[1]

MONSIEUR MY BROTHER, — I have been informed by the Archbishop of Embrun and by my first President of Paris, of your decision respecting my deliverance, and I am grieved that what you require of me is out of my power to grant; for you will find that it is not my fault if I am not and do not ever remain your friend. But being aware that you cannot more courteously intimate that it is your intention to keep me always a prisoner than by asking me to perform impossible things, I, for my part, am resolved to take my prison contentedly, being assured that God, who knows that I have not deserved it to be perpetual, being a prisoner by honourable warfare, will give me strength to bear it patiently. I regret nothing, therefore, except the fact that the obliging words that it pleased you to give me during my illness have not produced their implied effect, fearing that from henceforwards the affairs of Christendom will not be so well managed for the promotion of God's worship as they would have been had I remained bound both by blood and by marriage.

Your good brother and friend,

FRANÇOYS.

On Wednesday, the 11th, the ambassadors took leave of the king, and set out on their journey back to Toledo. The king also confided to their care letters to his sister, directing the duchess to return to Madrid without delay, unless the emperor appeared inclined to moderate the rigour of his demands. Marguerite was still residing in the Carmelite convent when the archbishop returned. With feelings of mingled admiration and sorrow she heard the recital of her brother's fortitude, and how promptly and nobly he had decided. The king's response, and his decided rejection of the articles submitted to him, was at once communicated to the emperor; and to render the announcement of the rupture of negotiations still more imposing, the duchess demanded an audience on the following evening, to take leave, previous to her departure for Madrid.

The king's refusal to ratify the treaty caused indescribable embarrassment and dissension in the Imperial Council. With

[1] Documents sur la Cap. de François I., No. 193.

renewed vehemence the matter was again argued in the presence of the emperor. The Bishop of Osma, Charles's confessor, led the very small section of the cabinet which advocated the adoption of a lenient policy towards the captive king, though this party comprehended some of the most illustrious names in Spain. The Duke of Alba, the Viceroy of Naples, Don Ugo de Monçada, Lalemant, the emperor's favourite secretary, and the Count de Beaurein were the chief upholders of the design to make the king's liberty dependent on the cession of the duchy of Burgundy; these nobles were, in fact, the exponents of Charles's immutable will respecting his captive, while the Chancellor Gattinara headed the extreme party in the cabinet, which stayed at no inferior measures, but boldly advised the emperor to detain the king in perpetual captivity ; to negotiate a permanent peace with the Italian potentates ; and to attempt an invasion of France for the conquest of the disputed duchy.[1] Doubtless, on the king's resolute refusal to cede the duchy, this policy would have been almost unanimously adopted by the cabinet, had it not been for the skilful diplomacy of Madame, in securing for her son's realm the powerful protection of Henry VIII. of England ; who, in his zeal for her service, had caused it to be expressly stipulated in his treaty with France that he would not suffer the dismemberment of the kingdom, even to effect the rescue of the king. This stout declaration, on the part of Henry, proved the salvation of France ; for Charles, powerful as he was, did not dare to incur his active hostility. The invasion of Hungary by the Turks ; the disaffection of the pope and the Italian princes ; and the distracted state of Germany, where religious factions disputing for pre-eminence filled the empire with anarchy and confusion, were no less powerful checks on the emperor's ambition.

The Council at length came to the conclusion to recede in nothing proposed to the king, and even to allow the Duchess d'Alençon and the ambassadors to take leave, and quit Toledo. Charles flattered himself that the joyous and volatile disposition of Francis would speedily weary of captivity ; and that the best way to effect this much-desired change was to appear to regard it as a fact irrevocably settled that the king was to remain his prisoner. He therefore intimated to Marguerite that he would

[1] Gailliard, Hist. de François I.

receive her at the time she proposed, as he intended to quit Toledo on Friday, October 13, and remove for change of air to Aranjuez.

Marguerite was overpowered with sorrow at this untoward termination of her negotiation; but yet she had her brother's renown and true interest too much at heart to counsel him to make concessions so disastrous to his kingdom. A project also had risen in her mind, one which she alone, who possessed his unbounded confidence, might venture to propose to the King of France. In the letter which she wrote to Francis announcing her final interview with the emperor — intelligence that, despite his fortitude, she knew must be felt keenly — her watchful solicitude for her brother transpires in the tenderness, not unmixed with hope, of her language. "Monseigneur, — After having passed four days without seeing the emperor, last night I went to visit him; and as the discourse which we held together is important, and conclusive as to my taking leave, I have desired the bearer of this letter to relate it to you in detail. But, monseigneur, I beseech you suffer not their extraordinary conduct and dissimulation to have power to vex you; for when I took leave I found the emperor so gracious that I verily believe he greatly dreads my departure; so that if you bear yourself firmly, I still predict that he will agree to your desires. It is very apparent that they wish to detain me here doing nothing, to favour their designs, as you will readily comprehend. You will see, monseigneur, by the news that has just arrived from Madame, the great distress she is suffering, and the loyal subjects that you have, for which I praise God. As you are so beloved by your subjects, and by foreigners also, I trust that He who inspires them with such good-will towards you may speedily grant the accomplishment of their desire for your deliverance." [1]

The emperor quitted Toledo for Aranjuez [2] on the following day, and it is probable that the Duchess d'Alençon commenced her journey back to Madrid early on the morning after his departure. The king, meantime, after he had despatched his ambassadors, suffered a severe, though happily a short relapse of fever, but which, while it lasted, created considerable appre-

[1] Docum. sur la Cap. de François I., No. 204.

[2] Journal des Itinéraires et Résidences de Charles Quint, Papiers d'Etat du Cardinal de Granvelle.

hension. The emperor received speedy information of the illness of Francis from his devoted and vigilant servant, Alarçon, whose ceaseless correspondence with his imperial master communicated the most minute incidents affecting his captive; and this knowledge was most likely the reason of the cordial courtesy of Charles's farewell to the Duchess d'Alençon. Indeed, when the intelligence of the king's relapse was officially confirmed, it was again debated in the Council whether it might not, after all, be sounder policy to intimate to the French ambassadors the emperor's willingness to accept a pecuniary ransom.[1]

Marguerite arrived in Madrid on the 16th or the 17th of October. She found the king suffering severely from fever, and confined to his bed. The first interview between Francis and his sister after her return was doubtless a painful one; the successful interposition of Marguerite, as a mediator between the emperor and himself, had been the hope of consoling the king for the repeated failures of his ambassadors in their negotiations for his release. This resource had failed, and there remained but the alternative of perpetual captivity or his consent to the dismemberment of France. The inexorable rigour of the emperor, however, had been already met by a countermovement on the part of the King of France, adopted by the express advice of his ministers; but so repugnant was subterfuge to the chivalrous mind of Francis that, to avail himself of it, even in the extreme circumstances of his position, appeared painful as the sacrifices demanded by the emperor. After the conferences of Toledo, the king, on his arrival at Madrid, signed a solemn protest against the arbitrary encroachments of the emperor, in the presence of the Archbishop of Embrun, of Brion, De la Barre, and Bayard. He declared in this document that all concessions extorted from him during his captivity, tending to the humiliation of France, to the curtailment of her territory, or to the dishonour of his crown and dignity, should be esteemed null and void after his return to his own kingdom; and that however solemn the oath might be by the which he was compelled to confirm such treaty, this violation should not be deemed sacrilegious, or his royal faith forfeit.[2] Gattinara fore-

[1] Le Glay, Négotiations Diplomatiques.

[2] This first protest made by King Francis is dated Madrid, August 22, 1525.

saw the probability of such an evasion of the treaty, and had expressed his fears to his colleagues and the emperor; but Charles, with a confidence he seldom manifested, persisted in placing implicit trust in the known chivalrous character of the king for the literal performance of any treaty concluded between them. Such trust did Francis but justice: as long as the emperor restrained his demands within the bounds of reason and possibility, the king would have executed the treaty to its most insignificant convention; but when Charles exacted terms the king had no power to grant without the formal consent of the states-general of the kingdom, and which, even then, he could not sanction without degradation to his dignity and the infraction of his coronation oath, Francis, seeing that dishonour must inevitably be incurred, either by the fulfilment or the non-fulfilment of the treaty, finally adopted that position least to the prejudice of his crown and the welfare of his people. The conflict in the king's mind was severe: dissimulation was his abhorrence; and many were yet to be his misgivings before he consented to yield to the counsel of less scrupulous advisers.

The sympathies of Europe, meanwhile, were enlisted in the success of Marguerite's perilous undertaking. All eyes were riveted on Francis and his sister, alone in Madrid and in adversity, even as formerly their prosperity and splendour rendered them spectacles of admiration and envy. Courier after courier arrived at Madrid, bearing condolences and assurances to the duchess of eager interest felt in her welfare and in that of her illustrious brother, from kings, statesmen, poets, philosophers, and theologians. Not content with the public expression of his admiration for the kingly virtues of Francis, the illustrious Erasmus addressed a letter to the Duchess d'Alençon to console her during this period of adversity. Marguerite received this epistle on her return from Toledo, while she stood by the pillow of the king, watching the progress of the depressing malady from which he again suffered. It must have imparted comfort to her; for then a few spirits, enlightened as that of Erasmus, swayed the world; and wide as was the difference of social rank, the noble panegyric penned by him beneath the humble roof of the printer Frobenius, could not fail to soothe and gratify Marguerite.

ERASMUS TO MARGUERITE, DUCHESS D'ALENÇON.

The admirers of the virtues of your highness have written several times, encouraging me to address some condolences to you in the midst of the tempest of misfortune which now assails you. Therefore, as the learned and noble personage who has presented this letter to you was about to set off unexpectedly for Spain to make a brief sojourn there, I hesitated whether it would be advisable to maintain absolute silence or to send you this short and badly expressed letter. My fear and reluctance have yielded to the singular affection that I bear you; for long have I admired the many excellent gifts that God has endowed you with. He has given you prudence worthy of a philosopher, chastity, modesty, piety, invincible strength of mind, and a marvellous contempt for the vanities of the world. Who can refrain from admiring in the sister of a great king virtues so rare, even amongst priests and monks? I would not even mention these virtues did I not assuredly know that you do not ascribe the merit of them to your own strength, but attribute all praise to the Lord, and Author of good. Thus, inspired with the desire to congratulate rather than to offer you consolation, have I ventured to address you. Your misfortune is great, I acknowledge; but no human event is terrible enough to overthrow a courage truly founded upon that immovable rock, Jesus Christ.

If you ask me how I thus know you, who have never even seen you, — many know your highness by your portraits, without having had the happiness of looking upon you in reality; but men of worth and science have described your mind to me in their letters more faithfully than any painter could delineate your person by the illusion of his colours. Nor should you suspect my sincerity; for though I eulogize you because I know your worth, I do not flatter you for your power, as I covet nothing from you but reciprocal esteem. Long have I loved the most Christian king, or, to speak more truly, for long have I returned his friendship, which first challenged mine in so many ways. But a woman, a heroine such as you are, I could not restrain myself from loving in the Lord.

I owe the emperor not only partiality but fidelity, and that by more than one title. In the first place, I am born his subject, and for some years I have been one of his privy counsellors, and have taken the oath of fealty. Would to God that he had gained this victory over the Turks! It was the object of our most ardent aspirations. Doubtless the sinfulness of mankind was too great for God to esteem us worthy of so signal a mercy. Magnificent as is the victory of the

emperor, I have not been able to congratulate him heartily; but I have great hope that soon the fatal issue of this battle will become as much an occasion of felicitation to you and to your France as to the emperor himself. So great a workman is He who in his secret counsels rules the affairs of this lower world, that often when misfortunes appear irretrievable, suddenly He converts and renders them conducive to our most triumphant successes. I found this hope principally in the boundless clemency of God, who, I think, has already begun to show Himself propitious; then, partly on the genius of the emperor, whose goodness equals and even surpasses the grandeur of his fortune, and partly on the marvellous dexterity of the very Christian king. More than this, I confidently hope that they have now formed a bond of friendship solid as adamant. The hope that I entertain of this is fortified by a letter which, before your departure for Spain, your highness wrote to that illustrious Polish baron, Jean de Lasco. He resides with me, and friendship has rendered all things common between us. That letter, in effect, not only announced your own firm resolve to endure with unshaken fortitude the burden of adverse destiny, but it likewise relieved our solicitude by a few words of happy presage. Should this hope be realized, we shall not only congratulate the emperor and yourself, but the whole of Christendom.

I have now to plead for a double pardon; first, for having presumed to address so puissant a lady, and, secondly, for doing so without suitable reflection, — a liberty which even plebeian friends scarcely allow themselves; but I have banished these scruples from my mind, confiding in your surpassing goodness.

May the Lord Jesus keep you in safety and health, and bestow upon you all prosperity. Written at Bâle on the eve of St. Michael's day, of the year 1525.[1]

This letter is written in Latin, a language which Marguerite perfectly understood. Her love of learning and industry were so remarkable that, amidst the distractions of the court, the Duchess d'Alençon, at the age of thirty-two, could read the Greek dramatists in their original tongue, besides being mistress of Latin and most of the modern languages of Europe.

The duchess received letters about this period, likewise, from the Dean of Strasbourg, Count Sigismond of Hohenlohe. He informed her of the progress of the Reformation in Strasbourg and throughout Germany, with other intelligence of great interest to the duchess. Marguerite did not reply to this

[1] Liber xx. Ep. ii. Ed. Londini, 1642.

epistle until some two months after her return to France. Her answer to the count is written in that strain of gentle courtesy and winning humility which enlisted such enthusiasm for Marguerite from individuals of every shade of opinion and degree: "I received one of your letters while in Spain, which gave me great consolation, and encouraged me to persevere in the path of truth, in which you believe me to be more advanced than I am. I trust that He who, despite my demerits, has inspired you with this opinion of me, will deign to accomplish this work; to obtain which, I pray you refuse me not your prayers. I do not seek to recompense you for the help which you render, or rather that God renders through you, to His faithful servants; for He reserves for you a much more precious reward than my thanks and praise can be: of this I feel assured, considering the bond of lively faith that unites you to our only Head, and which induces you to distribute liberally of your substance to those who need it, and who are united to us in spirit by faith. But as soon as the king returns to France he shall send to you, and seek you also in your turn. I hope, moreover, by the infinite mercies of God, that through your aid the Word of Truth may prevail. At first, as you will readily believe, there may be great impediment; but God is God, — He is what He is, invisible, incomprehensible, — one whose glory and victory are so essentially spiritual that He is the conqueror while the world deems Him vanquished."[1] This letter terminates by the expression of Marguerite's desire to see the Count de Hohenlohe in France, that by him she may be better instructed in things so conducive to her eternal peace. The humility and modesty of Marguerite's character develop themselves throughout her correspondence. Learned as she was, and in advance of her day in knowledge and enlightenment, her letters to the *savants* of Europe never assume; and with refined address she veils the patronage she was bestowing, while never forgetting the dignity of the princess. Her influence, however, though she never boasted of it, was so generally recognized, and her good-nature so often proved, that individuals from every rank of society applied to Marguerite to plead in their behalf with the king, Madame, or with the formidable

[1] Lettre de la Duchesse d'Alençon au Comte Sigismond de Haute-Flamme (Hohenlohe), traduite de l'Allemand.

Duprat, who was more dreaded than even Francis himself. The immense number of letters still preserved, which the duchess wrote to her brother and to his ministers, praying that the suit of her various petitioners might be granted, attest to what an extent, and how liberally and worthily Marguerite dispensed her patronage.

Madame, meantime, received the news of the suspension of negotiations with the emperor in indescribable dismay. The return of the king's malady, also, produced painful excitement throughout the country. All kinds of rumours were again circulated relative to the invasion of the kingdom, and the death of the king. Omens and predictions of most disheartening nature were treasured; a general despondency prevailed, as the state afforded no security for the protection of private interests, or the extension of commercial enterprise. On the 14th of October, the day of the departure of the Duchess d'Alençon from Toledo, four horsemen, habited as couriers, and wearing green caps on their heads, but who were, nevertheless, supposed to have mounted on horseback at the Porte St. Michel, rode furiously along the streets of Paris, into the court-yard of the Palais, where the parliament assembled, proclaiming the death of the king, and the consequent discomfiture of the regent; adding that what wise men chose to conceal, it became the duty of fools to publish and declare. The dean of the Sainte Chapelle presented himself to question these mysterious heralds, but could only obtain the iteration of their evil tidings; then, setting spurs to their horses, the horsemen rode away at frantic speed, and were traced as far as Notre Dame-des-Champs, announcing, as they proceeded, the death of the king in a loud voice, to the consternation of the people they met on their route. The parliament commanded a rigid investigation into the circumstances, and the arrest of the delinquents, intending to inflict upon them condign chastisement. The culprits, however, escaped detection; but this untoward affair added to the gloom oppressing every mind.[1] The regent, informed of the panic pervading Paris, despatched letters to the parliament, in which she assured the court of the convalescence of her son, who was making progress towards complete recovery; and notified to the senators her inten-

[1] Extrait des Régistres du Parlement de Paris, Docum. sur la Cap. de François I., No. 189.

tion of removing from Lyons to the castle of Blois, as soon as she received conclusive intelligence of the state of negotiations in Spain from the Duchess d'Alençon.[1]

The disputes between the parliament, Madame, and Duprat continued during these events with increased animosity; and, unfortunately for the king, encouraged the emperor to persist in his arbitrary demands, from the evidence it afforded of the little unanimity prevailing between the regent and the highest officers of the state, as Lalemant, Charles's secretary, plainly stated to Brion. The opposition of the parliament to the appropriation by Duprat of the archbishopric of Sens and the abbey of St. Benoit, in virtue of the royal donation, was as strenuous as ever. In obedience to the commands of Madame, the chambers again despatched three of their members to explain the grounds upon which the chancellor had been cited. The deputies found Madame sojourning at Tournon: they immediately sought audience, and humbly stated, as they had been instructed to do, that they were sent to learn her royal will and pleasure, and to render her obedience on all points. Madame, however, had too much experience in the tactics of the parliament to be deceived by these fair words, knowing that the more pertinacious its opposition the greater was its outward humility. She therefore replied that as the hour was then too late to confer, she declined to grant audience for that day. Thus repulsed by Madame, the deputies waited upon the secretary of state, Robertet, who received them with ominous solemnity. He assured them that Madame was so extremely incensed at the proceedings of the chambers that he could give no hope of obtaining audience for them during her residence at Tournon; but he advised them by all means to present themselves before Duprat. The members adopted Robertet's counsel. The chancellor received them with frigid dignity, and directed them to proceed to Lyons, there to wait the arrival of Madame. Before quitting Tournon, they obtained also audiences of several of the leading personages of the Council, who each assured them of the extreme anger of the regent. Louisa deeply resented the factious attitude of the parliament, and resolved to prove, by her neglect of its representatives, that she was far from being intimidated at its threats, and was

[1] Extrait des Régistres du Parlement de Paris, Docum. sur la Cap. de François I., No. 194.

determined to uphold Duprat, both in his secular and spiritual functions. Accordingly, when she quitted Tournon, instead of proceeding to Lyons, in which city the deputies expected her, she journeyed to Condrieu, where she spent eighteen days. From thence she went to Lyons, but still refused to admit the members, or to suffer the message intrusted to them by the parliament to be transmitted through one of her ministers. News during this interval arrived of the dangerous illness of the king, upon which Madame retired to the Celestine convent, and refused audience to any, except to Duprat and the Duke de Vendôme. The unfortunate deputies were detained, under a kind of honourable *surveillance*, the whole of this period, and during the progress of the processions and religious festivals held in celebration of the king's recovery. At length they were admitted to audience by Madame, one afternoon after dinner. The duchess received them with excessive severity. In a long harangue she recapitulated the various misdemeanours of the chambers during her regency. She related the benefits that she had conferred on France, and reproached the parliament for its extreme ingratitude in seeking to embarrass her government during this perilous crisis, especially by its fractious refusal to register the peace she had concluded with Henry VIII. of England, which, as she truly stated, had proved the salvation of France; and by the turbulent opposition evinced to the elevation of the cardinal chancellor to the see of Sens. "Nevertheless," continued Louisa, haughtily, "all the princes and great officers of the kingdom render obedience to my authority: the court of parliament has alone attempted to oppose me, and to sow discord throughout the kingdom — facts which have come to the knowledge of Spaniards, Italians, and Englishmen; while foreigners about my person here at court are marvellously astonished at the presumption and daring of the chambers. I know that several of your counsellors have been of opinion that the states-general should be assembled on purpose to oppose and diminish my authority, while others have spoken slightingly of me. Were I not the regent, I would give you notable and severe proof of my displeasure; but being what I am, I disdain to do so, — for my power is too great to avenge myself upon any of you. Others again say that I am not to be feared, being only a woman. Nevertheless, I know well that I am the mother of your king,

and, moreover, the regent of this realm; and that it does not become the court of parliament to seek to limit and restrain my power, as it has attempted on more than one occasion to do." Louisa proceeded throughout a long harangue in this strain of stern reprimand. None of her ministers were present to support her; or to suggest the points on which it was requisite that reply should be made. Madame commented well and unsparingly on the past proceedings of the court; and unfalteringly declared the attitude which it was intended to adopt, if, after this admonition, the same vexatious deportment were persisted in by the parliament. The members, declaring that they were not empowered to enter into details, having been simply deputed to receive the commands of Madame, in obedience to her summons, Louisa signified it to be her royal pleasure to detain two of the deputies, while the third proceeded to Paris, the bearer of missives to the parliament, demanding instant explanation on all the above points; while, until such had been obtained, the dismissal of the deputies could not be permitted.[1] This unexpected act of authority surprised the chambers. They, however, hastily assembled, and drew up a respectful but dignified reply to the regent: they recalled to her memory the reply she made on the commencement of her regency, when she was petitioned to re-establish the authority of the Pragmatic throughout the realm — "that on the return of the king from captivity she would employ her influence with him to give content in this respect to the parliament" — and they prayed that Madame would cause all proceedings relative to the archbishopric of Sens and the abbey of St. Benoit to be suspended until the king's return, promising, likewise, on their part, to do the same. "Madame, this court never made difficulty to accept your charter of regency; but, instead, has always employed its influence in sanctioning and supporting your power; nor has it ever been deliberated within this court to assemble the states-general, as it has been wrongfully reported to you." The memorial proceeds in respectful remonstrance as to the chancellor's proceedings, and concludes with an emphatic protest against Madame's accusation that she had been spoken slightingly of within the court. "Madame, we assure you, upon our honour, our conscience, and our loyalty, that within this court never has there been uttered a disrespect-

[1] Régistres du Parlement de Paris, Docum. sur la Cap. de François I., No. 203.

ful word against your sacred person; neither would this court have heard of such a thing without visiting the offence with so prompt a punishment as would have served as a salutary warning for the future."[1] Louisa feigned to be satisfied with the explanations afforded by the parliament. She had given them unequivocally to understand that she was disposed to suffer no restraint on her authority; and she presently dismissed the deputies from Tournon with tolerable cordiality. The parliament was not deceived, however, by these external tokens of good-will; for Louisa's enterprising spirit and ability, as long as she wielded the sceptre of France, afforded them constant disquietude; but so grave was the outward position of affairs that, even as in extremity of sickness a nauseous medicine is welcomed which promises prompt relief, so after the same fashion, at this period, were the regent and her skilful coadjutor in the government, Duprat, tolerated by the chambers.

The Duchess d'Alençon, meanwhile, remained at Madrid, devoting herself to her brother. Convinced that she had nothing more to hope from the effect of her personal mediation with the emperor, Marguerite revolved a scheme to accomplish the king's liberation. "Monseigneur, whatever happens, we will find means to deliver you," had been Marguerite's constant assurance to her brother, throughout her negotiation for his release. She now planned a bold and ingenious method for the evasion of Francis from prison; for the dissimulation of the emperor, and his evident resolution not to release his captive, except on terms impossible for him to accept, appeared to Marguerite a sufficient excuse for the deception she was about to practise. The duchess's beauty and affability had made a deep impression on a black slave whose business it was to supply the king's chamber with water and fuel, and who had frequently seen her in the presence of Francis. He was about the king's height, and possessed more than the ordinary intelligence of his race. About dusk it was the habit of this negro to enter the chamber of Francis and deposit a load of wood to supply the king's fire during the night. It was devised therefore by Marguerite, that Francis should exchange clothes with the negro; after staining his face and hands, until they resembled the hue of the slave's complexion, he

[1] Régistres du Parlement de Paris, Réponse de la Cour aux plaintes de Madame la Régente, Docum. sur la Cap. de François I., No. 205.

was to descend in his stead, and boldly walk out of the castle gates, beyond which she arranged that fleet horses should be stationed, and every preparation taken to insure her brother's flight to the frontier. The better to prevent the chance of detection, the slave was to place himself in the king's bed, and feign sickness; a device not likely to be speedily penetrated, as Francis latterly had been accustomed to spend a great part of the day in retirement. Marguerite had made her arrangements with the greatest prudence and success, when an unlooked-for accident frustrated the design. It happened that two days previous to the time fixed for the execution of the plot, M. de la Roche, brother of the Marshal de Montmorency, and the Sieur Clermont Champion, private secretary to the king, quarrelled violently upon some trivial matter. In the heat of the dispute, M. de la Roche so far forgot himself as to strike his opponent. Beside himself with rage, Champion sought the king, and demanded redress, or the punishment of his assailant. Unfortunately, Francis was in too indolent a mood to enter into the detail of the difference between his chamberlain and Champion; or, perhaps, the fact that M. de la Roche was the aggressor, and that probably on investigation it would be necessary to compel him to make *amende honorable* for the insult inflicted, rendered the king, from his partiality for the house of Montmorency, unwilling to judge in the matter. He therefore declined to interfere; a decision doubly exasperating to Champion, insomuch as his rank was not illustrious enough to demand redress by the sword from M. de la Roche. Transported with fury at the indignity he had received, Champion devised the treacherous vengeance of revealing to the emperor the plan in agitation for the king's liberation, which had of necessity been confided to him. He therefore secretly departed for Toledo, and obtaining an audience of the emperor, confessed the plot.[1]

Charles's conduct on this occasion was in perfect keeping with the policy which ever regulated his actions. He caused the depositions of Champion to be taken in writing, and transmitted them to Alarçon. He ordered the watch over the king never to be relaxed; and that means should be taken to ascertain his secure detention at stated hours during the night. The slave suborned by Marguerite, the emperor directed Alarçon to remove;

[1] Ferreras, Hist. de España, t. ix.; Sandoval, Hist. del Emperador Carlos V. lib. xii.

but beyond this, he enjoined the strictest silence respecting the transaction. Charles uttered no reproaches to the king, and apparently never even alluded to the subject. His anger, nevertheless, was profound; and his resentment against Marguerite was not the less deep because dissimulated until a moment favourable for its manifestation. Thoroughly selfish in thought, as well as in deed, the emperor made no allowance or excuse for the feelings which prompted Marguerite to plot her brother's liberation. Had the duchess succeeded in her attempt, there is not the slightest doubt that her own arrest, and that of all the French nobility then in Spain, would have followed. With indiscriminate severity, Charles would have deemed this retaliation just, and have pursued it with uncontrollable pertinacity. Marguerite, however, was prepared to submit to the consequences of her deed, whatever suffering it might have entailed. "Monseigneur," she said in one of her letters to her brother, "I beseech you to believe that nothing will prove painful to me in rendering you service, even to the scattering of my ashes to the wind, — nothing will be irksome, difficult, or afflictive; but all will seem, on the contrary, consolation, repose, and honour."

But, disappointed in her hope of thus rescuing the king, a great and noble project animated Marguerite's mind. Proud of her brother, and glorying in his renown, she upheld him in his resolve rather to die in captivity than to cede the ancient rights appertaining to the heritage of the Valois. Yet even under the vigorous rule of Madame, France languished for the presence of the king, and chafed impatiently at the degradation his captivity at Madrid inflicted on the national honour. As the emperor was inflexibly resolved to enforce his own terms, a successful appeal to arms could alone compel him to restore his captive to liberty; but while the King of France remained in prison at Madrid, Madame dared not proclaim her league with the King of England and the Italian princes, or march an army, as it was there stipulated, to the frontiers of Spain. Her son might be compelled to disown her acts; and counter-mandates, issuing from the Alcazar of Madrid, spread distrust, confusion, and indifference amongst the allies of France. Marguerite perceived a remedy, and she feared not to propose it to her brother. The king's magnanimity, and his resignation to the painful circumstances attending his captivity, convinced her of his fortitude to

hear from her lips that counsel which respect for the kingly majesty induced his faithful servants, and even Madame herself, to withhold. Marguerite's project was no less a one than to propose to her brother his abdication of the crown of France, in favour of the young dauphin Francis, under the regency of Madame. This sacrifice of his crown for the welfare of France, Marguerite eloquently urged upon her brother. In language fervent and impassioned the duchess expatiated on the glory of this act of disinterestedness, its benefit, and the check it would place on the contemplated aggressions of the emperor. Living henceforth as a simple private individual at Madrid, Charles could have no further interest to persecute and detain the king, who, divested of his kingly prerogatives by his own deed, relinquished all power over the territories of France ; so that it was with Madame and her grandson, the free and independent monarch of France, with whom the emperor in future would have to deal. Marguerite addressed a kindred mind ; and her words roused in the bosom of Francis a spirit of noble fortitude and self-sacrifice. The letters patent, conferring the crown on the dauphin, which Francis immediately commanded to be drawn, are couched in language of impressive simplicity and dignity. The king therein declares his hopelessness of obtaining his release from captivity, though he had long relied on the humanity and clemency of the emperor, who had shown himself inaccessible to remonstrance or to compassion. He reiterates his resolve sooner to die in prison than accept conditions degrading to his royal authority and the liberties of the people, which he had solemnly bound himself at his coronation to maintain. Francis then proceeds to make a formal renunciation of the crown to his beloved son Francis, Dauphin of Viennois, with all the royal rights and privileges appertaining thereto. He further absolves all the princes and dignitaries of the kingdom from their oath of allegiance ; and commands them to proceed forthwith to the coronation of the dauphin as king at Rheims, with all the accustomed forms and solemnities. The document then confirms the regency of the kingdom, until the majority of the young king, on the Duchess d'Angoulême, "from the perfect knowledge which we and all her subjects possess of her great prudence, merit, and goodness, of her singular zeal for the progress of religion, her love and compassion for our said subjects, united to the tender and inestimable affection which she

has always borne towards us and our children." Francis bestows unlimited powers on the duchess as regent, and tutoress of the king, and of his other children, Henry, Madelaine, Charles, and Marguerite, "all of whom, with our eldest son, are to remain together under the guardianship of Madame, at any place she may please to decree; in order that they may be nurtured in concord and fraternal love, and taught to love and honour God and His holy Church, to revere and cherish their earthly and spiritual parents, to bear singular affection to the princes of our blood, and to show bounty and compassion towards all our subjects, of whatever rank and condition, and especially to the poor." Francis continues then to define the privileges and functions appertaining to Madame, as regent; he grants her absolute authority to dispose of ecclesiastical benefices, and to remove at pleasure any of the princes and prelates from the Council of State. The power conferred on Madame, however, could not exceed that of which she was in present possession. These letters patent, therefore, as far as they regarded Madame, were merely confirmatory of the edict appointing her to the regency, issued before the king's departure for Italy. The succeeding paragraph furnishes a proof of the confidence the king reposed in the affection and ability of his sister. "In case it should happen that our said lady and mother, by reason of illness or other hindrances, or by death (from which misfortune may God in His mercy and goodness deliver us), so that she can no longer exercise the functions of government, for and in behalf of the king our eldest son, or of our other children; in such case, we will and ordain, for such is our pleasure, that our very dear and very beloved sister Marguerite de France, Duchess d'Alençon and de Berry, shall succeed in all matters concerning the said government of the kingdom to the place and authority of our said lady and mother, to do and accomplish all the above-mentioned things, with like power and authority over all." The document terminates with a paragraph in which Francis reserves to himself the right to resume his regal rights in the event of his release.

The real existence of this important edict has long been questioned, though it has been quoted on tradition by all historians of the reign of Francis; all doubt has been lately set at rest by the discovery of the original document amongst the

registers of the parliament of Paris.[1] It is signed by Francis in his usual tall, bold, and clear characters; and is witnessed by the Archbishop of Embrun, the President de Selve, the Marshal de Montmorency, the Bishop of Lisieux, De la Barre, and by a personage of the name of De Veretz. The edict, after it had been conveyed into France by the Marshal de Montmorency, and not by the Duchess d'Alençon,[2] as has been asserted by historians generally, was neither published nor registered by the parliament, because there had been some delay or informality in its presentation; and principally, that the ratification of the treaty of Madrid intervening rendered its various clauses null. The document was transcribed, after the return of the king, on the registers of the parliament, as an honourable memento of the patriotism and liberality displayed by Francis during his captivity.

The king next dismissed a great part of his train of gentlemen and nobles, ordering them to return into France and serve Madame and his son with loyal devotion. The High Treasurer Babou, Brion, and even Montmorency himself, were included; for, aware of their faithful attachment to his crown and person, Francis sacrificed his private inclinations to the good of his country. Fortunately, the Treasurer Babou promptly availed himself of an unexpired passport in his possession to quit Spain, as a mandate had been issued for his arrest by the Imperial Council, under the pretext that he had opened and perused certain letters missive, addressed to officers in the service of the emperor.[3] Through his ambassadors, who still lingered at Toledo, the king demanded a safe conduct for the Marshal de Montmorency, to whom he intended to intrust the important edict for the proclamation of the dauphin as king.

The rigour with which the emperor and his ministers treated Francis at this period was excessive. The attempt made by the Duchess d'Alençon to plan the escape of her brother increased the animosity of the Council, ever hostile to Francis; while the indignation of the emperor was implacable, and he anxiously

[1] Ordonnances du Roi François I., tome ii., fol. 91, verso, Régistres du Parlement de Paris.

[2] Discours du Roi à l'Assemblée des Notables, December 17, 1527; Godefroy, Grand Cérémonial de France.

[3] Deuxième Protestation du Roi contre le Traité de Madrid, Docum. sur la Cap. de François I., No. 223.

debated whether it would not alike minister to his interest and to his resentment to detain Marguerite in Spain, rather than suffer her to quit his dominions. Perpetually harassed by the representations of his Council, Charles hesitated, being unwilling to commit an act of such severity and discourtesy. Marguerite's firmness, and the undaunted manner in which she pleaded her brother's cause, had given great umbrage to the emperor; he felt that she knew and despised his insincere professions; and to her influence over the king he pretended to trace the steady refusal of Francis to subscribe the treaty as proposed by himself. With his habitual dissimulation, Charles feigned to discountenance the proposal of those amongst his ministers who desired to arrest the Duchess d'Alençon, on the plea that she had treasonably conspired against the emperor, to the prejudice of his person and dominions; yet the viceroy and those possessed of his greatest confidence were well aware that the project was far from displeasing to the emperor; and that, should its accomplishment become possible without committing so open a violation of good faith as a repudiation of the safe conduct granted to the duchess would be, the opportunity might be embraced by him with alacrity. It was doubtless pleaded to the emperor that the arrest of the duchess could not strictly be arraigned, as she herself had first violated the conditions on which entry into Spain had been granted to her, by conspiring for the king's evasion. Charles, however, had suppressed the investigation of this affair altogether; and the only proofs of Marguerite's participation in the plot rested on the testimony of the angry secretary, Champion. The design had failed; and even the emperor shrank from the odium of commanding the imprisonment of the duchess upon a charge which was not publicly proved against her, one that she never had had the opportunity of denying. His desire to get Marguerite in his power, however, was not the less intense; and a project to achieve his purpose arose in the emperor's mind, by which he imagined it might be accomplished with a far less amount of public censure and *éclat*. Marguerite's position at this time was one of considerable peril; her detention in reality was an object of great political moment to Charles; for the health of Madame, always precarious, seemed to be succumbing beneath the burden of affairs; and in the event of her decease or inability to carry

on the government, the prompt intervention of the Duchess d'Alençon was of essential necessity to the existence of France, deprived as the kingdom was, either by death or by captivity, of the majority of its princes and nobles. So sensible was the king of the danger his sister was incurring by a longer residence in Spain that he determined no longer to delay the painful ordeal of bidding her farewell. Previously, he recalled his ambassadors from Toledo, intending that they should travel back to France in the suite of the duchess. They were instructed to apply to the emperor before quitting Toledo, for a prolongation of Marguerite's safe conduct; and also to request that permission might be accorded her to travel through the kingdom of Navarre on her way back, which would considerably abridge the length of the journey, instead of traversing Castile and Arragon to enter France by Roussillon. The emperor harshly refused both these requests, adding "that now there was no occasion for Madame la duchesse to remain longer with the king, and that he thought she had better return without delay into France."[1] The rupture of the negotiation, which he attributed to Marguerite's influence, so greatly indisposed the emperor against her that he impatiently anticipated the news of her departure from Madrid. He therefore caused the following decisive words to be inserted in the passport granted to the duchess: "This present safe conduct is valid only until the beginning of the month of January; and that provided Madame la duchesse sets out without delay."[2] No greater tribute to Marguerite's abilities and influence could Charles render than this eager haste displayed by him to separate her from her brother. The emperor added also, when he admitted the ambassadors to audience, before their return to Madrid,[3] "that it was now his desire to occupy himself solely with the affairs of his own marriage; consequently, he wished to give final commands for the safe-keeping of the king, whom it was his intention to transfer to some place where there would be no occasion for so great a number of guards as he had at present; nevertheless, he was minded to continue to treat him as became the dignity of a king of France."

Marguerite remained about a month with her brother after her departure from Toledo. She quitted Madrid, on her journey back

[1] Deuxième Protestation du Roi, contre le Traité de Madrid, Docum. sur la Captivité de François I., No. 222. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid.

again into France, about the 19th of November. She carried away from Spain no pleasant reminiscences; but, on the contrary, a painful sense of the discourtesy of the emperor, and an indignant recollection of the duplicity of his words and actions. "I can truly say that I have had to deal with people of the greatest dissimulation, and of as little honour as can be," wrote the duchess to the chancellor of the duchy of Alençon, Jean de Brinon.[1] "Sometimes they gave me good words, but the next moment retracted all. I tried with all my power, by every means (as you are now aware), to conclude peace, friendship, and alliance between the emperor and the king, and spared nothing which could or ought to be offered to accomplish this. Despite all the ceremonies with which the emperor overwhelmed me, he actually refused me permission to remain in his company when attended by three ladies; nor would he grant me a prolongation of my safe conduct, excepting to change it for one so worded as to afford them opportunity to detain me in his kingdom until the expiration of the truce, and afterwards not to let me depart at all." It was with painful reluctance that Marguerite bade adieu to her brother, and only in express obedience to his commands. She quitted him when he was apparently in greater need than ever of the consolation afforded by her presence; for at no period since his captivity had the restoration of Francis to his kingdom appeared so hopeless. His health, which had never been thoroughly restored, began to decline again under the depression incidental to his position; but Marguerite's entreaties failed to divert the king from his firm resolve to send her back to France. At the prospect of this painful separation, Marguerite's courage wavered; she who had inspired the king with fortitude to relinquish his crown, to isolate himself, being a prisoner in a foreign land, from the companions of his youth, and to endure alone the burden of his captivity, — felt her constancy yield when about to witness the consummation of the act which she had counselled. The sterner courage of Francis then came to her aid; and, in her turn, Marguerite, who had pleaded so faithfully, was comforted and consoled. This parting, however, cost Marguerite many tears; and it is ever after alluded to in her poems and various writings as the most painful moment of her life.

[1] Lettre de la Duchesse d'Alençon à M. le Chancelier d'Alençon, Archives du royaume, Suppl. au Trésor des Chartes.

The duchess rested at Alcalà the first night after her departure from Madrid. On rising the following morning she was greeted by a letter from Montmorency, containing news of the king. "Mon cousin," writes the duchess in her reply, which was immediate, "I received your letter at my *lever*, and you will easily believe what pleasure it afforded me to hear tidings of the king. As for intelligence concerning myself which you ask for, my bodily health is well enough; but the mind pines for that which it has just left. All night long I dreamed that I held the king by the hand; and I would not wake to have no longer that delightful illusion." [1] To her brother, Marguerite failed not to write by the same courier who was to bear her letter to the Marshal de Montmorency. "Monseigneur," she said,[2] "the farther I journey from you, the more I feel my absence from your presence, which would be too grievous to bear, if the desire to obey you, and to render you still greater service than I could by my continued residence at Madrid, inspired me not with strength to submit." At Alcalà a gentleman sent by the Duke de Infantado met the duchess to pray her, in his master's name, to honour his palace at Guadalaxara with a visit, where the duke's sister and his children were expecting her. The Duke de Infantado, Don Diégo de Mendoza, was the enthusiastic friend of Francis, and one of his warmest partisans; so much so, indeed, as to have incurred the serious displeasure of his imperial master. Subsequently the duke offered, in concert with three other members of the Spanish aristocracy, to become a hostage to the emperor for the faithful performance, on the part of Francis, of the treaty of Madrid. The emperor took such umbrage at this partiality for the king that the duke received a message from court which amounted, under so despotic a monarch as Charles, to a prohibition to receive or to confer with the Duchess d'Alençon to the effect "that, if the duke wished to please the emperor, neither he nor his son would see or speak to the duchess." [3] Marguerite writes to inform her brother of her intention of accepting the duke's invitation; and after commenting on this precaution on the part of the emperor, she adds:

[1] MS. Bibl. du Roi, F. de Béth., No. 9127.

[2] MS. Bibl. du Roi, F. Suppl. No. 126.

[3] Lettre de la Duchesse d'Alençon au Maréchal de Montmorency, MS. Bibl. Roy., F. de Béth., No. 9127.

"But the ladies are not forbidden to me; to whom, therefore, I shall make a point of talking in double measure."[1]

The duchess arrived at Guadalaxara from Alcalà on the 21st of November. The Duke de Infantado, unwillingly compelled to obey the mandate of the emperor, was not present to receive her; she was welcomed, however, by the duke's daughters, his grand-daughter the Countess of Saldaña, and by his nieces. The enthusiasm and admiration felt by the duke and his family for the king was cordial enough even to satisfy Marguerite. "Never could I have imagined to find myself here amongst a party bearing such enthusiastic attachment for the king, which has been a source of great consolation to me," exclaimed Marguerite, in a letter to Montmorency, written from Guadalaxara. The eldest daughter of the Duke de Infantado, Donna Ximena de Mendoza, is supposed to have cherished a romantic attachment for the king. This tradition has been wrought into various episodes, all differing the one from the other according to the fancy of the narrator; the only well-ascertained point, and the climax where all the stories meet, being that Donna Ximena eventually took the veil in 1526, and became the foundress of the nunnery de la Pietà at Guadalaxara. Marguerite was surrounded, while she remained the duke's guest, by every homage and attention it was possible to bestow, to mark his sympathy and reverence for her character. The Countess of Saldaña was likewise a warm friend of the king's, and contributed much by various acts of kindness to ameliorate the rigour of his captivity. She sent a message to Francis through the duchess, during her abode at Guadalaxara, to the effect "that she would pray so perseveringly that at length God would grant him deliverance."[2] The duke's daughters and the countess likewise made Marguerite a present of a pair of mules, richly caparisoned, to draw her litter. Marguerite highly lauds these mules, which she declares to be so beautiful and swift-footed that she would desire the king to make essay of their merits on the road between Madrid and Lyons.[3] While she remained the guest of the Duke de Infantado, Marguerite wrote

[1] Lettre de la Duchesse d'Alençon au Maréchal de Montmorency, MS. Bibl. Roy., F. de Béth., No. 9127.

[2] Lettre de la Duchesse d'Alençon au Roi, MS. Bibl. Roy., F. du Suppl. Fr. No. 110.

[3] Ibid., No. 123.

to Montmorency to send her some blank forms signed by Francis, that she might fill them up as occasion occurred. The king by the next courier sent the duchess five of these signatures, of which she promises to render good account.[1]

Marguerite spent some days with her kind entertainers at Guadalaxara. On quitting the palace of the Duke de Infantado, she journeyed a distance of four leagues, and reposed for the night at a place which is nameless, though probably it was Hita. The following day, November 30, she travelled only three leagues, and slept at Jadraque, a town five leagues distant from Siguenza, which city she reached on the following day, December 1. Marguerite pursued her journey by slow stages, unwilling to quit the country inhabited by her brother. The weather was very cold, and ceaseless rains increased the fatigues of her journey along the rough roads of Castile. At every halt of her escort, and at the conclusion of her day's journey, Marguerite occupied herself with her endless correspondence. Sometimes she writes to the king, and to Montmorency likewise, but invariably to the former. Her correspondence with Madame and with the emperor's ministers seems also to have been incessant. "I hear that in two days I shall meet Brion, who is riding post from Paris to see the king," wrote Marguerite to Montmorency from Hita, the place she first halted at after quitting Guadalaxara; "would to God that it was I who had so to return, for my haste and diligence would be more than Brionnycque! But my misfortune renders me silent; and so I beseech God to achieve that which, if it is to give me perfect contentment, cannot be compassed without my aid."[2] Marguerite's observation on Brion and her play on his name seem as if she thought slightingly of his diligence in the service of his royal master. Brion never was fortunate enough to possess Marguerite's favour; his feuds with Montmorency and the animosity which ever subsisted between these two noblemen, both equally patronized by the king, divided the courtiers almost of necessity into partisans of either one or the other. The personal friendship felt for Montmorency by the Duchess d'Alençon insured his ascendency at court; but Brion, whose pliable character and good-

[1] Lettre de la Duchesse d'Alençon au Maréchal de Montmorency, MS. Bibl. Roy., F. de Béth., No. 9127.

[2] Ibid., No. 8514.

humoured vivacity were more to the taste of Francis than the marshal's imperious temper, retained sufficient influence ever to remain the object of his rival's suspicion and dislike. "I pray you, monseigneur, believe not what the Sieur de Brion will tell you, for he always misrepresents my words,"[1] said Marguerite to her brother; but what foundation the duchess had for preferring this heavy accusation is nowhere stated, though most probably her dislike to Brion arose from the prejudice against him instilled into her mind by Montmorency. The emperor, meanwhile, was not a little embarrassed at the turn affairs had taken. His acquiescence in the cessation of the negotiations had been more to intimidate Francis than from a conviction that accommodation was impossible. A copy, also, of the act of abdication which Francis had signed fell either by accident or design into the emperor's hands, and occasioned indescribable consternation in the Imperial Council. To prevent this important edict from leaving Spain was deemed an act of indispensable necessity; and the emperor accordingly began to concert plans to that effect with his habitual wiliness. The personages to whom it was probable that the king would confide this document to convey into France were the Duchess d'Alençon or the Marshal de Montmorency. Marguerite was already on her journey homewards, under the protection of a safe conduct signed by Charles himself; while an application from the king for his favourite, Montmorency, lay then before the Privy Council. It appears, therefore, to have been decided by Charles and his ministers to renew the negotiations for the king's release, in order that Francis might be induced, on the express request of the emperor, to recall his sister to Madrid, that she might, as before, preside at the discussions; when, on the expiration of the month of December, which was the end of the term during which her liberty was guaranteed by her last safe conduct, it was intended to arrest her.[2] Measures were likewise concerted in the Council for the arrest of Montmorency if he attempted to quit Spain. The French ambassadors still lingered in Toledo, and the emperor, probably through the Viceroy of Naples, skilfully contrived that a demand on their part should be made praying the Council

[1] Lettre de la Duchesse d'Alençon au Roi, MS. Bibl. Roy., F. de Suppl. Franç. No. 17.

[2] Dupleix, Hist. Générale de France.

to despatch deputies to Madrid to treat with Francis personally, as all intermediate negotiations had so signally failed. The emperor of course assented, and immediately accredited a gentleman of his chamber to proceed to Madrid, whom he charged to deliver the following letter to the king: —

LETTER OF THE EMPEROR CHARLES V. TO THE KING.[1]

MONSIEUR MY BROTHER, — On the prayer of your ambassadors I am willing to send to confer with you my Viceroy of Naples, Don Ugo de Monçada, and Maître Jean Lalemant, in order that you and your ministers may know that it is not my fault if peace be not concluded; the which will greatly conduce to the service of God and the welfare of Christendom, — a thing desired earnestly by me, as God knows, to whom I appeal in witness of my sincerity. I pray you credit the above-named personages, as you would myself, and so tranquillize your mind, that I may now and ever remain,

Truly your brother and friend,

CHARLES.

The emperor's messenger was further instructed to request the king, on behalf of his imperial master, to recall the Duchess d'Alençon, who was then sojourning in the town of Siguenza. He moreover signified to the king the emperor's willingness that the negotiations should for the future be carried on at Madrid; and that certain members of the Spanish Privy Council, beyond the three mentioned in Charles's letter, should be directed to repair thither for that purpose. It was the emperor's wish, however, that the final ratification of the treaty, did one fortunately result from the conferences, might be exchanged in the city of Toledo.

The consent of Francis to renew the conference was of course not refused. It was given, nevertheless, with little hope; as his ambassadors informed him that the emperor manifested no intention of receding from the conditions so perseveringly presented. The king, however, firmly declined to recall his sister to Madrid. He stated "that he was willing to hear what the ambassadors of the emperor wished to impart; but that he was still in the same mind and resolution to do nothing to the prejudice of his kingdom; consequently, as the matter had been carefully argued, there remained but to receive the

[1] Docum. sur la Cap. de François I., 192.

emperor's decision thereon." [1] There is no doubt that the Duchess d'Alençon if she had been left to her own devices would at once have returned to Madrid when informed of the renewed overtures made by the emperor, and his request that she might preside at the conferences. The king, however, signified to her his positive command that she should continue her journey with the utmost despatch. It is probable that the penetration of Francis, sharpened as it then was by experience of the emperor's subterfuges, detected his designs, and his meditated retaliation upon Marguerite for her fearless deportment while sojourning at his court. Besides, Francis probably divined that the emperor's anxiety to stay his sister's journey arose from a suspicion that she was conveying into France the important act of the abdication of his crown in favour of the dauphin; but which, for many considerations, he had resolved to confide to Montmorency. The following letter is the first which Marguerite wrote to her brother after news reached her of the renewal of the negotiations. It was probably written just before her entry into the city of Siguenza.

LETTER OF THE DUCHESS D'ALENÇON TO THE KING.[2]

MONSEIGNEUR, — I have received letters this evening from Madame; and, as you will perceive, I have not feared to open and to read those which she has addressed to yourself, that I may participate in the feeling with which you will peruse them; for it has often pleased you to give me the assurance that, in addition to the happiness of being your sister, you regard me as your second self. You see, monseigneur, that Madame writes two things which ought to give you infinite consolation: the first is the news which she sends you of the favourable condition of her own health, — a statement all your correspondents confirm; the second is the hope which she now entertains of being able to accomplish your deliverance. Monseigneur, for these things I beg you, in God's name, to take comfort and to rejoice, believing that He who raised you from death after your physicians had given up hope of your life, will still deliver you when all other succour fails; for the graces and the patience which God has given you are alone sufficient to deliver you from this purgatory of Spain. Believe me, monseigneur, I shall languish until the eager desire I feel

[1] Rapport fait au parlement de Paris, par Ph. Babou, sur toutes les négociations pour la délivrance du Roi, Docum. sur la Cap. de François I., No. 211.

[2] MS. Bibl. Roy. F. du Suppl. Fran. No. 10.

is satisfied to ascertain whether you will obtain good and satisfactory conditions from those [1] who are to be sent to visit you; but the fear that nothing will ensue is greater than my hope to the contrary, from my knowledge and dread of their accustomed dissimulation. I do not know what to say more on this matter, seeing that I have not yet been able, and am now still less capable of serving you; but I journey slowly, expecting the merciful interposition of the Almighty, and beseeching Him to regard and reward the patience, though His own gift, which He has bestowed upon you in your extreme tribulation. But if you see good signs of hope, remember, I beseech you, monseigneur, that I am as yet only at twenty hours' distance from you, and ready to bring back for your use a litter so easy and comfortable that we might carry you back to your friends asleep, as your grand equerry has already written you word. I conjure you, monseigneur, do not hesitate to convert my sad and wearisome suspense (which cannot be termed repose) into happy labour and toil for you, by one who so entirely subscribes herself,

Your very humble and very obedient subject and more than sister,

MARGUERITE.

The renewal of the negotiations offered strong temptations to Francis. In defiance of his solemn protests by word of mouth to the ambassadors of the emperor, both before he quitted Italy [2] and since while at Madrid, and given also under his royal sign-manual, Charles instructed his ambassadors to propose to the king again the identical conditions so often and emphatically repudiated. It seemed as if the emperor aspired to become his captive's willing dupe, by his assiduity in pressing temptation upon him. The king's affairs at home and abroad were in a much more flourishing condition than they had ever been since the disastrous defeat of Pavia; and that which Francis so firmly refused then, there was no present incentive to urge him to concede. Skilful and crafty as Charles was, it is surprising that he did not foresee the future violation of conditions so flagrantly unjust, so reluctantly conceded, and so easy to evade

[1] The viceroy, Don Ugo de Monçada, and Lalemant.

[2] Et après que le roy fut fait prisonnier dudict empereur, après la bataille de Pavie, en présence desdicts visroy, marquis de Pescaire, et les capitaines Antoine de Leve et Alarçon, et aussi l'abbé de Nageres, ledict Seigneur a protesté clairement en leur présence que au cas qu'il fust contraint par ledict empereur, de quitter et laisser la dicte duché de Bourgogne, ou autres droits de la couronne de France, cela demeureroit de nul effet luy ayant recouvert la liberté. — Deuxième Protestation du Roi, contre le Traité de Madrid.

through the intervention of the high legal tribunals of France. Charles excused the rigour of his conditions on the plea that by one comprehensive compact between the two crowns, he wished to exterminate the ancient feuds subsisting between the Houses of Hapsburg, Valois, and Burgundy; but so arbitrary a convention as proposed by him was not calculated to promote peace, but, on the contrary, to sow the seeds of future contentions, wars, and bitter hatred between the subjects of the two monarchies. Montmorency was commissioned by the king to treat in his name with the viceroy; the President de Selve and the Chancellor Gattinara, whose tedious harangues were before found so embarrassing, took no part in the renewed discussions. Madame, as soon as the news reached her of the resumption of the negotiation, wrote to her son, exhorting him to accept the conditions as proposed by the emperor, subject of course, as was privately understood between them, to the ordeal of revision, in accordance with the right of after judgment that it was pretended the mental reservation under which the king accepted the treaty bestowed. Many were the weighty reasons which Madame urged on her son and on the attention of his ambassadors; throughout the instructions to the latter, however, the most distant allusion is avoided to the ulterior intentions of the French government. The death of the Marquis of Pescara, November 29, 1525, while besieging the fortress of Milan, rendered Charles still more anxious to enforce the prompt acceptance of his terms. The emperor, meantime, was pressing in his demands that Marguerite should be recalled to Madrid; for if she had conveyed away the act of the king's abdication, the proclamation of the dauphin, and the open recognition by France of the formidable Italian league, which, since the decease of Pescara had flourished in double vigour, might simultaneously occur. Francis again steadily declined to summon back his sister; and the only effect the emperor's solicitations produced was, that an express was despatched by Montmorency to the duchess, who was at Siguenza, to hasten her journey so as to reach the French frontier before the expiration of her safe conduct. Marguerite was travelling slowly, unapprehensive of danger or treachery. "Mon cousin," wrote the duchess in reply,[1] "my messenger will tell you how diligently I intend to

[1] Lettre de la Duchesse d'Alençon à Montmorency, MS. Bibl. Roy., F. de Béth., No. 8507.

travel, in accordance with the injunctions you have sent me by command of the king. I will delay so little on the road that I hope to reach Narbonne by Christmas Day. I do not tell you it is not without extreme reluctance that I hasten away so rapidly out of Spain, knowing with so little certainty how the king really is; nevertheless, as you have written to desire me to make all possible diligence, and that very soon you will tell me wherefore, I have travelled as rapidly as my train of attendants can bear. I have sent to the king the letters which Chateauvieux brought me this evening from Madame, in which I hope he will find pleasurable intelligence. She has been very ill, but you may assure the king that she is now in good health; but, mon cousin, on my arrival at this place I was in anxiety as much respecting the king (from whom I have had no letter since the arrival of the viceroy, Don Ugo, and Lalemant at Madrid) as for Madame, fearing to hear evil from both. But God has relieved me from apprehension respecting the one, as I beseech Him to do speedily as regards the other; for without the certainty that both continue well, my own health would not long sustain this anxiety."[1]

It has been generally asserted that Marguerite was indebted to the Constable de Bourbon for the timely warning which enabled her to evade the sinister designs of the Spanish Council for her arrest, should she be found within the dominions of the emperor after the expiration of her safe conduct. Not a trace, however, of any such intimation on the part of Bourbon exists, either made directly to the duchess or through the ministers of her brother. The directions which she received through Montmorency from the king evidently first roused Marguerite to diligence and suspicion; while the refusal of the emperor to prolong her safe conduct at the time he so vehemently demanded her return to Madrid, were facts sufficiently significant to warrant the distrust manifested by Francis.

From Siguenza, Marguerite journeyed on the following day, December 3, to Medina Céli, a distance of eighteen miles; which, considering the admonition of Montmorency, was not at very expeditious speed. She probably, however, had good motives for her sojourn here; for the Duke de Medina Céli, whose

[1] Lettre de la Duchesse d'Alençon au Roi, F. du Suppl. Franç., No. 100.

guest she became, was son-in-law to the Duke de Infantado, and both he and his duchess were stanch friends and partisans of the captive king. Her reception at Medina was very sumptuous and enthusiastic; and Marguerite assures the king, in one of the two letters which she addressed to him during her sojourn here, of the cordial sympathy and friendly interest felt for him by the duke and his consort.

Brion met the duchess at Medina. He was the bearer of intelligence of great political import from France, probably of the close alliance concluded by Madame with the League, which had lately been joined by the Duke of Ferrara. By the treaty she had just concluded with the Italian princes, the regent engaged to send a force to the frontiers of Spain to prevent the emperor from despatching succours into Italy: she, moreover, promised to furnish them with five hundred lances, and a monthly subsidy of 40,000 ducats.[1] "You will learn from Brion that which will encourage you to hold firm; for your gaolers, sire, will soon be compelled to lower their tone," wrote Marguerite to her brother.[2] "God, who, without any effort of their own, raised them to such prosperity, will humble them by your endeavours, if it pleases Him, so that you will yet come off with great honour and profit. Brion brings you intelligence,[3] by which you will perceive that your mother has not been slumbering; therefore, I wish greatly that you would await his arrival before coming to any final conclusion, as he will impart very agreeable news to you; for it appears as if Madame had overheard that which you commanded me to say to her — not that it amazes me you should both be of the same mind; for this has never been otherwise."

In a second letter which Marguerite wrote during the same day to her brother from Medina Céli, she says, after congratulating the king on the gradual improvement of his health: "You are aware, monseigneur, should there be prospect of peace, with what heart, delight, and diligence I would obey your commands to return; but if their conditions prove to be so high and exacting that they[4] will not condescend to your reasonable offers, I beseech

[1] Gailliard, Hist. de François I.; Mezeray.

[2] Lettre de la Duchesse d'Alençon au Roi, F. du Suppl. Franç., No. 63.

[3] Of the league concluded by Madame with the King of England and the Italian princes.

[4] The imperial envoys in Madrid.

you, monseigneur, to treat them with that graciousness of manner which few possess in like degree as yourself; for if you behave toward them with courteous firmness, as you so well know how, they will be constrained to agree to your proposals, considering their own necessity. I know well, monseigneur, that it ill becomes me to offer you advice; but did I not speak what I think, I could not feel content; for I have witnessed such dissimulation and contradiction in that quarter that I dread lest they may continue so to act. But if they attempt to constrain you to adopt their unreasonable demands, it appears to me that patience and delay on your part will be very prejudicial to them, and honourable to yourself; as you well know how affairs progress in England and Italy, which must compel them to acquiesce in your deliverance." [1]

The three imperial envoys, meantime, had arrived in Madrid, and were engaged in daily conferences with the king and with Montmorency. It has often been erroneously stated that the Duchess d'Alençon inspired her brother with the design of accepting Charles's demands, under reservation to fulfil afterwards what alone appeared to him expedient and reasonable. The duchess, on the contrary, advised her brother to patience and delay, "if they attempted to constrain him to adopt their unreasonable demands, a mode of conduct very prejudicial to them, and honourable to the king." There is not a passage in Marguerite's correspondence which will bear this former interpretation: at a subsequent period, indeed, she counselled her brother, as will be seen, to relinquish the duchy of Burgundy sooner than remain in captivity, as the emperor perseveringly persisted in forcing his own conditions on the king. Nevertheless, Marguerite, in common with Madame, the ministers of her brother, and a large majority in the imperial cabinet, felt convinced that a treaty so extorted and oppressive could not be executed. Absolute as were the sovereigns of France, the stipulations of the treaty of Madrid surpassed the king's power to enforce. Francis was only tenant for life of the crown, its fiefs, and royal domain; he had no power to alienate the most insignificant territory, without the assent of the states-general of the kingdom. The duchy of Burgundy, incorporated with the crown, could not therefore be permanently severed again without the permission of the states,

[1] MS. Bibl. Roy. F. Suppl. Français, No. 106.

and the consent of its own peculiar parliaments; neither was it possible for the king of himself to abrogate the rights of the monarchs of France to feudal sovereignty over the counties of Flanders and Artois. It was required of Francis, if he accepted the treaty, to ratify it again in the first town of his dominions which he might enter after quitting Spain; to enforce its acceptance on the states-general, which he was immediately to convoke; to compel all the parliaments throughout the realm to receive and register it; and to procure its solemn recognition by the dauphin, as soon as the latter should have attained the age of fourteen. If these conditions were not fulfilled, Charles demanded the king's word of honour to return to Madrid and deliver himself up again. Meantime, his two eldest sons, the dauphin and the young Duke of Orleans, were to be sent into Spain as hostages of the king's good faith; unless Madame preferred (the emperor added by way of a great concession) to deliver as hostages, instead of the Duke of Orleans, twelve principal nobles of the realm.[1]

The emperor, blinded by his uncontrollable ambition, refused to see the utter improbability that conditions such as these could be enforced on a proud and still powerful nation, rapidly recovering from its financial embarrassment consequent on the defeat of Pavia. The Chancellor Gattinara, the most inveterate and far-seeing of the enemies of France, stated his conviction in forcible language, in presence of the emperor and his ministers, that such a convention would be disregarded; that the French people would ridicule the credulity of the Spanish, and with unanimous accord declare their sovereign exempt from performing arbitrary conditions imposed upon him while in prison. By other parties it was represented to Charles that if Francis, imitating the example of his ancestor King John, wished religiously to keep faith with his conqueror, still the king's good intent would be useless, as the various legislative bodies of his realm would absolutely reject the treaty of Madrid: and if it were asserted that the king's power was sufficient to insure the eventual acceptance of the convention, the comparatively insignificant question of the Concordat might alone be quoted in opposition, which it took

[1] The noblemen nominated to serve as hostages by the emperor were, the Dukes de Vendôme and Albany, the Count de St. Paul, the Duke de Guise, the Marshal de Lautrec, the Count de Laval, the Marquis of Saluzzo, the Marshal de Montmorency, the Marshal d'Aubigny, the Seigneurs de Rieux, de Brezé, and de Brion.

Francis nearly two years to impose on the parliament of Paris alone, by the most rigid application of his prerogative. The emperor listened in silent displeasure to these remonstrances, which produced no alteration in his resolve; except that he instructed his ambassadors at Madrid to render the proposed treaty less repulsive to Francis and his subjects, by offering to the king the hand of his sister Eleanor, which he had so steadily refused to Marguerite's solicitations.

The Duchess d'Alençon, meantime, quitted Medina Céli, and journeyed to Montréal, a town on the frontiers of Arragon, and distant about fifteen miles from the former place. After leaving Medina, Marguerite, for greater speed, quitted her litter, and performed the remainder of her journey on horseback. The roads were in so bad a condition as to be nearly impassable in many districts; and as she approached the mountainous districts of Spain, the cold became intense. The king in his final protest against the treaty of Madrid inveighs against the emperor's ungallant deportment towards his sister, in compelling her to take so painful and fatiguing a journey in the depth of winter; "for my said lady the duchess, in the month of December, with her ladies, her train of gentlemen, and her baggage, was constrained, in the midst of cold, snows, and frost, to traverse the kingdoms of Castile and Arragon, the counties of Barcelona and Roussillon, to enter France before the expiration of the truce, as the emperor refused to grant her a passport to travel through the kingdom of Navarre, in order to quit his dominions more quickly; all which were very significant, and apparent signs that he wished to detain the said Duchess d'Alençon a prisoner, with her suite, in case she should be found within the territory of Spain after the termination of the truce." Marguerite was on horseback from twelve at noon until seven in the evening, on her road from Medina to Montréal, a distance of five leagues; so many were the obstacles and impediments on her road. Her cheerful spirit never sinks while enduring these hardships; neither does she appear to feel or to yield to fatigue; for, while writing compassionately of the sufferings and weariness experienced by her ladies, she always declares herself well, and anxious about nothing but the king's affairs. Wherever she halted, if only for a few hours, Marguerite's indefatigable mind busied itself in writing to her brother, to Madame, or to Montmorency, and even

sometimes to all three. She mentions incidentally besides, in her correspondence, multitudes of other persons to whom she has been writing. One letter she addressed from Siguenza to the viceroy, to procure the liberation of a poor courier, named Guygnegast, who had been arrested and detained in prison at Pampeluna. Such was Marguerite's anxiety to obey her brother's commands, and to quit Spain before the conclusion of the month of December, — a project which seemed of rather doubtful accomplishment, on account of the difficult roads, — that she rose before daylight from the time she quitted Medina, and was on horseback by six in the morning, and travelling with all possible speed until nightfall. The sense Marguerite so constantly manifests in her letters, of the emperor's "dissimulation," doubtless convinced her that Montmorency had good reason for his mysterious admonition to her to hasten as quickly as she could from the imperial dominions.

On the 4th of December the duchess rested for the night at Bubierca in Arragon; from which place she addressed a letter to Montmorency, to inform him that she had written to Madame Elvire,[1] "as you advised me to do; for you know I neither can nor will think of anything but that which relates to the service of the king and Madame, though I begin to perceive now that I am not worthy to render the one or the other service, except by obeying their will."

The duchess continued her journey with extraordinary despatch. She reached Saragossa probably about the 6th of December, having been two days in performing a journey on horseback of upwards of sixty miles. Marguerite wrote a long letter to her brother from Saragossa. She had been informed of his doubts, and of the conflicting sentiments of honour and expediency then agitating his mind. Madame had despatched the skilful secretary of state Robertet, to Madrid, to aid the king, and to convince him of the necessity of repelling the emperor's aggressive policy by dissimulation. Marguerite therefore sent Robertet all the letters to read to the king which she had received from France since her departure from Medina. An incredible number of couriers must have been employed by Madame in passing and repassing between France and Spain.

[1] A lady probably connected with the families of the Duke de Infantado, or Medina Céli.

Scarcely a day elapsed without the arrival of messengers in Madrid from Lyons. The same active intercourse was maintained between Francis and the imperial court at Toledo. The High Treasurer Babou, in his relation of events in Spain before the parliament of Paris, states that during his sojourn with the king he had himself performed the journey between Madrid and Toledo eighteen times during the space of five months. "I have sent the letters I have received to Robertet that he may read them to you," said the duchess, in her letter to her brother from Saragossa.[1] "You will thereby hear, monseigneur, what news we have received from England, and what is the present hope of Italy; also, for your diversion, I have sent a letter which treats of nothing but your children. Monseigneur, by the letters which Madame writes, you will perceive how earnest and pressing is her desire for your release, and that I should remain with you. But, fearing that I am not worthy of participating in your much-desired and much-prized company, and that God has decreed so for my punishment, I pray you, monseigneur, to provide that my absence may not be made a pretext by them for delaying that which we most desire, which is your liberty. I beg you to be pleased, also, to consider, that despite their dissimulation and aggression, you must arm yourself with patience, as Madame exhorts; but if the ample and honourable offers which you have made, and the fears your resistance occasioned, have not induced them to lower their pretensions, I conjure you, monseigneur, in the humblest manner possible, to agree to whatever they demand; for that compact cannot be bad which restores you to France, neither can any be good while you are detained in Madrid. I am waiting to learn, with equal dread and anxious interest, what you have concluded upon with the emperor's envoys, being so well acquainted with their trifling and evasions. I beseech you, monseigneur, if you desire me to live, send me speedy intelligence of your state of health, and of all that God has put into your heart to do to accomplish your deliverance, without heeding longer their duplicity and delays. In a word, if you perceive that your past fortitude has not inclined them to act more generously, let not any thought of your children or of your territories arrest your return; for your realm needs your presence for the love which more than ever it

[1] MS. Bibl. Roy. F. du Suppl. Fran., No. 9.

vows to render you. Believe me, monseigneur, if I thought that your longer endurance of captivity were more honourable to you, I would not tender you this counsel; but, perceiving how indispensable your presence is to your friends, and how little impression your prolonged prison makes on your enemies, I do not fear to trouble you with this long letter to implore you to consent to whatever they may please to propose."

Thus urgently conjured by Madame, by his subjects and ministers, by the emperor's pressing solicitations, and finally by his loved sister Marguerite, Francis stifled the promptings of chivalrous honour; and though he recoiled at the deception which he was about to practise, expediency prevailed and compelled him to avail himself of a chance of release, which, as it was stated in the king's secret protest, "he had hoped to obtain from the emperor's goodness, benignity, and clemency." On the 19th of December, 1525, Francis issued instructions to the ambassadors to sign the treaty of Madrid, subject, however, to the after ratification of the regent. The king, in this document, gives a summary of the various proposals made to the emperor, and which Charles had refused to accept,—namely, the cession of the kingdom of Naples, the duchy of Milan, the sovereignties of Genoa, Tournay and the Tournesis, Montaigne and St. Amans, the town and castle of Hesdin; the remitting of the homage owing by the emperor as Count of Flanders and Artois to the crown of France; the pardon of Bourbon; and a ransom of three millions of golden crowns, to be paid by instalments. "To these excessive offers," the document proceeds to state, "Madame la Duchesse d'Alençon added, after her arrival, the cession of the viscounty of Auxerre and the district of St. Laurens, with the proposed payment of an additional sum of five hundred thousand golden crowns; but the emperor being still dissatisfied, and demanding the cession of the duchy of Burgundy in addition to the above, the king is pleased to agree thereto, as also to give as hostages for the execution of the treaty his two eldest sons, or M. le dauphin with twelve principal nobles of his realm; and to execute all the above conditions within four months after his release, provided the emperor, on his part, is content to bestow Madame Leonor, Queen of Portugal, in marriage on the king, and to give her as a dowry the counties of Auxerre, Masçon, and Bar-sur-Seine, and likewise to agree to the

marriage of the infanta of Portugal, daughter of the said queen, with Monseigneur le dauphin." [1]

Marguerite meanwhile continued her journey. On the 10th of December she was at Cervera, in Arragon, and about the 14th of the same month at Igualada. It was probably while at the former place that she received final intelligence of her brother's resolution to accept the treaty of Madrid, and to espouse the Queen of Portugal. She thereupon wrote the following letter to the king, to express her joy, and to entreat him to suffer her to return to Madrid, and which she doubtless despatched after quitting Igualada. Marguerite frequently omits to date her letters, or to note the place where she was sojourning when she wrote them. The contents of the letter given below, however, show that it cannot have been written before the 14th or 15th of December, as the resolution of Francis to accept the treaty of Madrid was not taken before this period. The public authorization given to the ambassadors to treat with the emperor on those terms is dated December 19.

The Duchess d'Alençon to the King.[2]

Monseigneur, — I cannot praise God heartily enough for the mercy which He has conferred on all who desire your deliverance, by the news that you have been pleased to send me by Langey, — intelligence which gives me a joy that you only can appreciate. Therefore, monseigneur, if He who is merciful as He is Almighty has been pleased, out of compassion for our affliction, to set you free, I beseech you, monseigneur, listen to the petition of a heart devoted to you, and restore to me the happiness which I lost when you commanded me against your will and my own to leave you, by revoking your orders; for my sorrow and vexation must doubly increase if it pleases you not to grant my request, as it is so easy a matter for you now to reverse the hard decree. I am writing by this post to request M. d'Embrun and De la Barre to present my letter, and to show you what I have written to them; as I have there stated more at length the reasons for my return, which seem to me so cogent. I entreat you, monseigneur, to weigh well what I have said; and if you then agree with me, do not refuse me a lackey's place (*place de laquais*), if nothing more, in your own litter. Nevertheless,

[1] Procès-verbal de l'injonction faite par le roi aux ambassadeurs de Madame la regente sa mère, de signer le traité de Madrid, Docum. sur la Cap. de François I., No. 214.

[2] MS. Bibl. Roy. F du Suppl. Fran., No. 86.

monseigneur, if you think I can serve you in France better than the Marshal de Montmorency, I am ready to obey you; but it appears to me that as soon as Madame shall have ascertained your will, she will set off without delay on her journey to meet you, accompanied by your children and the hostages; while if she waits for my arrival it will consume much time. Believing, monseigneur, that there I should be of little use to you, and having to bear the fatigue of my wearisome journey alone, I would willingly say to you: *Si possibile est, transeat à me calix;* but if, on the contrary, you perceive that I speak ignorantly from not knowing your present designs, and that it pleases you to ordain otherwise, leaving everything to your decision, which I have always found wise and righteous, I shall end the matter by saying, *Fiat voluntas tua.*

Your very humble and obedient sister,

MARGUERITE.

The importunity of the duchess failed to move the king's wise resolve not to confide the fate of those he cared for most to the tender mercy of the emperor. Marguerite journeyed diligently forwards, however, without waiting to ascertain whether the king granted her request, doubtless thinking, in that case, the trouble of travelling back a few more stages preferable to encountering the risk of falling a victim to any subtle snare. On the 17th of December Marguerite arrived at Barcelona. She had emphatically concluded one of her previous letters to the king, written from Medina, with the words, "If you arrive, monseigneur, at any satisfactory conclusion with the envoys, I beseech you do not fail to send for me back again, even if I am far distant from you as Barcelona."[1] When near to this city Marguerite was overtaken by a messenger from the king, bringing letters containing favourable news of his health, and apparently an explanation of the motives which had induced him to command the Marshal de Montmorency to direct her to travel out of Spain with all possible speed. This information of course furnished the duchess with a sufficient answer to her application for permission to return to Madrid, and she prepared to resume her journey with double expedition. "I hope to reach Narbonne by Saturday next," said the duchess in the letter she despatched to her brother from Barcelona;[2] "but these

[1] Lettre de la Duchesse d'Alençon au Roi, MS. Bibl. Roy. F. du Suppl. Fran., No. 106.

[2] MS. Bibl. Roy., F. du Suppl. Fran., No. 109.

laborious daily journeyings are like fast-days, which are generally accepted rather by compulsion than out of devotion and good will; but it is absolutely requisite that I should so exert myself, for besides the intimation which you, monseigneur, have just sent me, I have myself seen here cause for much haste. The reason is rather a startling one, as M. De la Barre will tell you, to whom I have written in greater detail upon this matter." Subject to these perpetual alarms from the emperor's treachery, Marguerite pursued her journey. From six o'clock in the morning until nightfall she remained on horseback; the severity of the weather and the badness of the roads greatly augmented her discomforts. Marguerite's heroism throughout these difficulties never forsook her; and so great was her despatch that she performed the journey between Barcelona and the town of Salses, the first place on the French frontier, in four days.

The duchess reached Salses by the 21st or the 22d of December, nine or ten days short of the period during which her liberty was guaranteed by her safe conduct. This latter document was valid until after the 31st day of December; it is therefore erroneously asserted by historians of the reign of Francis, that Marguerite fled with such precipitation from Spain as only to reach the little frontier town of Salses an hour before the expiration of her safe conduct. Even then, it has been averred, her arrest would have ensued, had she not taken the precaution of sending forwards to Narbonne, to desire the Seigneur de Clermont, the king's lieutenant in Languedoc, to meet her at Salses with a troop of cavalry, which display of military force so intimidated those charged by the Imperial Council with her arrest that they dare not attempt it. Charles caused it to be inserted in all the passports granted to the subjects of the king that the safe conduct was valid during its stipulated limit of time, provided that the personage in whose favour it was drawn committed no act to the prejudice and detriment of his royal person, his kingdoms, and subjects. That the emperor so construed Marguerite's attempt to procure her brother's successful evasion was the only plea upon which he could command her detention before the expiration of her safe conduct, without the most flagrant breach of honour. It was apprehended that Charles might avail himself of this pretext, finding that his solicitations prevailed not with the king to induce him to recall

his sister to Madrid; hence the stringent injunction given to Marguerite to hasten her departure from Spain. If this project, however, had been seriously entertained by the emperor, he would not have delayed the arrest of the duchess until she re-entered her brother's dominions, when it might have been so easily and effectually accomplished during her journey through Spain. That her detention would have taken place, had she been imprudent enough to remain in the imperial territories after the expiration of the safe conduct, is almost a matter of certainty; but that no such present peril awaited her at Salses is a fact proved beyond dispute by the duchess herself, who, in a letter addressed to the chancellor of her duchy of Alençon, expressly states that she met with no impediment or disturbance on her journey homewards. After relating the perfidious design of the emperor to arrest her if she were found within his dominions after the expiration of the term of her safe conduct, Marguerite says, "This fear compelled me to make such diligence that every day for a whole month I was on horseback from six o'clock in the morning until I arrived at my lodging at night. *God, however, gave me such effectual aid that against their will and intent I returned home safely, without meeting any hindrance.*"[1] In another letter the duchess expressly states that she spent Christmas Day in the city of Narbonne.

The first letter written by Marguerite to her brother after her return into France is dated from Beziers, where she arrived on the 26th of December. It was here also that the greeting of Madame reached her courageous and indefatigable daughter.

THE DUCHESS D'ALENÇON TO THE KING.[2]

MONSEIGNEUR, — I have waited until I reached this place of Beziers (where I arrived this evening) to send you word that I spent Christmas Day in Narbonne. I expected also to hear news from Madame, without which I was reluctant to write. Monseigneur, I send you the very messenger she has despatched to me, that you may hear from him of her good health, and also of the welfare of your kingdom; for the people along this frontier of Spain have received me with enthusiastic gladness, as the herald of your speedy approach. I, for my part, have not concealed the news of the peace about to be

[1] Lettre de la Duchesse d'Alençon à M. le Chancelier d'Alençon, Archives du Royaume, Suppl. au Tresor del Chartres.

[2] MS. Bibl. Roy., F. du Suppl. Fran., No. 4.

concluded with the emperor, which has recompensed them for their pains in receiving me, and has, besides, rendered them so joyous that I never witnessed a greater demonstration. I assure you, monseigneur, that when I am speaking of you, as soon as I name the king, everybody eagerly gathers round me to listen; so that I am constrained to relate very amply of your condition, and never do I bring my discourse to a conclusion without drawing abundant tears from persons of every rank, whose prayers are so often raised to heaven in your behalf that I doubt not God, who has inspired them so to do, will at length grant their petition. The time is arrived for this mercy to be needful; for He knows that unless you are soon restored to us, the love we bear you is so great that we cannot survive your continued absence. But principally your mother suffers, who only lives for you, as she has this day sent me word; and also her who is but born to serve you both, and who with all her heart is and desires to remain

Your very humble and very obedient subject and sister,

MARGUERITE.

Madame had written to inform her daughter that she would meet her at Tournon; but Marguerite, whose impatience to embrace her mother was great, wrote to entreat her, "out of love for the king," to journey as far as Pont St. Esprit. Madame complied, and set out from Lyons as soon as she heard of Marguerite's arrival in France; but the hurry of her journey, and the excitement of meeting her daughter, brought on an attack of gout severe enough to arrest her further progress at Roussillon, a small town in the department of Isere.[1] Marguerite proceeded from Beziers to Montpellier on the 29th of December,[2] from whence she wrote again to her brother. "Monseigneur," said she, "the farther I penetrate into your kingdom the more do I realize the fact that you are still at Madrid; for although it cannot be denied that your realm is in as good condition as can be desired, yet it resembles a body without a head, — living if you are restored, but dying if you remain absent."[3] At Montpellier Marguerite found the Cardinal de Lorraine and the

[1] Lettre de la Duchesse d'Alençon au Roi; MS. F. du Suppl. Fran., No. 128, Bibl. Roy.

[2] Rapport fait au parlement de Paris par Phil. Babou; Docum. sur la Cap. de François I., No. 211.

[3] MS. F. du Suppl. Fran., No. 45, Bibl. du Roi.

papal legate, who both joined her *cortège*, and accompanied her to visit Madame. Marguerite also speaks of the arrival of the Duke and Duchess of Vendôme, whom Madame had sent to meet her.[1] The duchess spent one day at Montpellier; she then continued her progress to Nismes, at which place, probably, she received news of the indisposition of Madame. She continued her journey rapidly up the Rhone as far as Douzère, a small town not very distant from Montelimart. At Douzère Marguerite met with a painful accident, which compelled her to keep her bed for a day.[2] She was alighting from her litter upon some steps, when her foot slipped and she fell to the ground, and cut her knee to the bone. The wound was a painful one, so much so, she states, that the surgeons summoned were astonished at its severity.

Marguerite resumed her journey again about the 6th or 7th of January, and reached Roussillon the day but one following her departure from Douzère. Madame was suffering greatly from indisposition: she received her daughter with joyful emotion and thankfulness for her safe return; and in her mother's satisfaction Marguerite found recompense for the toils, the dangers, and the hardships encountered so courageously by her during what she terms her "Grandes Journées d'Espagne."

[1] MS. F. du Suppl. Fran., No. 45, Bibl. du Roi.

[2] Lettre de la Duchesse d'Alençon au Roi; Bibl. Roy., F. du Suppl. Fran., No. 128.

CHAPTER XIII.

MARGUERITE had been sojourning at Roussillon scarcely five days in the enjoyment of the mental and bodily repose which she so much needed, when she was suddenly summoned to resume her journey, and repair without delay to Blois, where the little Duke d'Angoulême had fallen grievously ill of measles, — a malady which swiftly communicated itself to the other royal children, with the exception of the infant Madame Marguerite. All the children of the king were delicate; especially the Princess Madelaine, who was growing up to womanhood endowed with rare beauty of feature and form. Madelaine possessed that exquisite loveliness which fills the mind with foreboding; all felt intuitively, as they gazed upon the lustre of her soft dark eyes and marked her fragile figure, that soon one so fair and physically unfitted to contend with the vicissitudes of life must pass from amongst them. Marguerite, therefore — to whom every circumstance was yet vividly present attached to the premature decease of the little Princess Charlotte, whose fatal disorder commenced with measles — felt excessive alarm when news reached her of Madelaine's illness. Madame was still indisposed, and unable to quit Roussillon; but as her attack of gout was less severe than usual, Marguerite took leave of her mother and proceeded to Blois, to nurse her nephews and nieces, and to relieve their governess, Madame de Montréal, from the responsibility of her position. When the duchess arrived at Blois she found all the children convalescent, excepting the Duke d'Angoulême, whose illness continued for some days to cause her serious uneasiness. The Princess Madelaine suffered comparatively little, and soon recovered her accustomed health; but the disorder ultimately proved of serious consequence, as it still further increased her tendency to pulmonary complaints. Marguerite wrote to Madame to join her at Blois;

she appears to have greatly felt her probable approaching separation from the dauphin and the young Duke of Orleans, whose departure would disperse and throw a gloom over the merry circle of children surrounding her there. Madame, however, had other grave duties to perform, and could not at that period comply with her daughter's desire. She still remained in the neighbourhood of Lyons, waiting the arrival of the Marshal de Montmorency with the treaty of Madrid. Ill, and exhausted with anxiety, Louisa's chagrins were great at this period. The details of the negotiation had not yet reached her, for Marguerite brought the most recent tidings of the king into France; and even she knew of his welfare only up to the 17th of December, the date of the letter which Francis had written to her while at Barcelona.

By the High Treasurer Babou, who arrived in France about ten days before Marguerite, the king sent a verbal message to the regent, praying her to assent to a certain secret measure evidently connected with the pending negotiation, and which therefore it was deemed most prudent not to commit on paper. This request probably referred to the hostages to be given to the emperor on the ratification of the treaty. The king, doubtless, desired Madame to consent to the departure into Spain of his two elder sons, rather than to ransom the Duke of Orleans by delivering in his stead the twelve noblemen nominated by the emperor. Whatever might have been the king's request, Madame yielded a most reluctant assent; it could not have been one relative to the ratification of the treaty of Madrid, as that measure had been warmly insisted upon as indispensable by the regent herself. "Monseigneur," writes Madame,[1] "as by the contents of the paper in cipher which I send, you will be entirely satisfied upon the affair you were pleased to desire Babou to speak to me about, I will not write more in detail except to assure you that the earnest request which he made to me in your name I find so binding and obligatory that your wish shall be obeyed; and though nature rebels against the command, the mind and will submit to your good pleasure, to obtain that[2] the hope of which alone sustains the life of your very humble

[1] Docum. sur la Cap. de François I., No. 220, Lettre de la Duchesse d'Angoulême au Roi.

[2] The deliverance of the king.

mother and subject, Loyse." In a letter written apparently a few days afterwards, the Duchess d'Angoulême informs her son of the illness of his children, and of their favourable and speedy recovery. Always solicitous to spare her brother unnecessary anxiety, the Duchess d'Alençon wrote at the same time the following letter from Blois: —

THE DUCHESS D'ALENÇON TO THE KING.[1]

MONSEIGNEUR, — The written assurance that Madame sends you of her convalescence renders it needless for me to say more on that subject, except to confirm her statement that your children, your kingdom, and herself are as well as we can desire them to be during your absence. But, monseigneur, the fear that I have latterly experienced about your children makes me relate to you their past peril for very joy at their happy escape. First, M. d'Angoulême took the measles, accompanied by violent and continued fever; M. d'Orleans caught them next, but suffered little fever; Madame Madelaine then fell ill, but without pain or fever; then, out of sympathy with his sister, M. le Dauphin. They are all now quite cured, and continue as healthy as can be. M. le Dauphin performs wonders in his studies, and mingles a hundred thousand matters with his regular school pursuits; we hear no more of fits of passion, but, on the contrary, of many commendable virtues. M. d'Orleans is now sitting poring over his book, and says that he is determined to be good also; but M. d'Angoulême knows more than all the others, and does and says things to be esteemed wonderful for his age rather than childish prattle, which, monseigneur, it would sometimes astonish you to hear. Little Margot [2] is growing like me; she also follows my example and always refuses to be ill; they tell me that she is becoming a very graceful child, and promises to be far prettier than Mademoiselle d'Angoulême [3] ever was. I have now told you, monseigneur, the truth concerning your children, which has for once compelled me to run the risk of wearying you; for, as I am not worthy to serve you in weightier matters, to your trifling affairs (since the thought of you is in all) I will devote life and energy; nothing do I esteem unimportant or impossible in which you are concerned.

Your very humble and very obedient subject and sister,

MARGUERITE.

[1] MS. Bibl. Roy., F. du Suppl. Fran., No. 117.

[2] The Princess Marguerite, godchild of the Duchess d'Alençon. She was about two years old.

[3] Marguerite means herself.

An event occurred during these transactions destined to exercise an absorbing influence over Marguerite's future fate. This was the escape of the King of Navarre, Henri d'Albret, from the castle of Pavia, where he had been detained in close custody ever since the disastrous defeat of Francis before that city. The King of Navarre had vainly offered the emperor a large ransom; but his proposals were uniformly rejected by the Marquis de Pescara, to whose *surveillance* he was committed, as the King of France had been to that of the Viceroy of Naples. Charles's policy forbade him to liberate a prince whose claims on the crown of Navarre had recently been the cause of much bloodshed; and possibly he waited until the negotiations with Francis reached a satisfactory conclusion, to exact from Henry the renunciation of his rights on that kingdom as the price of his liberation. The king, however, had little desire to trust to so precarious an event as the emperor's forbearance and clemency, — which the Marquis de Pescara softened his refusals to accept a ransom by quoting, — and he plainly perceived that a perilous flight from the fortress of Pavia, or the alternative of ceding his rights to Navarre, were the only expedients left him. With assiduity, therefore, Henry set about bribing two of his guards by liberal donations to refrain from bestowing too searching a scrutiny on the movements of his servants and officers as they passed and repassed from his chamber. "He was a prince endowed with singular ingenuity and graces of body and mind," says Olhagaray,[1] "abounding in admirable and subtle invention, and in finding remedy for things apparently most hopeless." Having thus dexterously suborned the two guards posted in the antechamber of his apartment, Henry caused a rope ladder to be secretly conveyed to him; and, resolved sooner to risk his life than to cede his heritage, he determined to attempt to escape through the window of his chamber, which was situated at a fearful height in the principal tower of the fortress. About midnight of the 20th of December, 1525, the king arrrayed himself in the habiliments of his faithful page, François de Rochefort, who placed himself in his master's bed. By means of the ladder of rope, Henry then succeeded in reaching the base of the tower;[2] he was followed in his perilous descent by the Baron d'Arros

[1] Hist. de Foix, Béarn, et Navarre.

[2] Lettre du Roi de Navarre à Maître Hélies Andre.

and a *valet-de-chambre* named Francisco, who both, likewise, contrived to alight in safety. The night fortunately was dark; so that, disguised in his page's habit, the king succeeded in passing the courtyard of the castle, which was thronged with soldiers, without recognition. Outside the city walls horses had been provided for his escape; Henry seized the bridle of one, and took the road towards Piedmont.

Early the following morning the captain of the guard entered the king's apartment as was his custom, — ostensibly to pay his respects, but in reality to be able afterwards to assure the governor of Pavia of the safe detention of his prisoner. The curtains were closely drawn round the king's bed; the officer approached, when a page respectfully requested that his royal master might not be disturbed, as his Majesty had suffered severely from illness throughout the night, and was then reposing for the first time. The officer, completely deceived, withdrew. The king's repose, however, continued so long that at length suspicion was roused. Towards the afternoon the officer on guard again entered, and authoritatively approaching the bed, drew back the curtain. The *ruse* was then of course discovered; Rochefort, nevertheless, was left in undisturbed possession of the royal couch, but as a prisoner. Pursuit was made after the King of Navarre, but Henry had already passed the boundaries of the imperial dominions. Without stopping to take rest or refreshment, Henry pursued his flight until he reached Lyons, where he arrived on Christmas eve, 1525.[1] When recruited from his fatigues the King of Navarre presented himself before Madame, by whom he was received with distinguished honour. Marguerite was then absent at Blois, but on her return to court she found the king at Lyons. She probably met Henry as an old friend; for the king was one of the early companions of Francis, and a member of Marguerite's juvenile court at Amboise; though, as he was several years younger than herself, he was then eclipsed in her favour by the more manly achievements of Montmorency and Bourbon. The gallant action of his escape from the fortress of Pavia, and his devotion to the cause of the still captive king, now attracted Marguerite's notice; and she found solace in conversing with

[1] Lettre du Roi de Navarre à Maître Hélies Andre, conseiller, et juge d'appeaulx du Comté de Périgord.

Henry, who had so bravely fought by the side of her gallant brother, and shared in his defeat and captivity.

The King of Navarre at this period had just completed his twenty-second year. His features were handsome, and his bearing erect and noble. His mind was cultivated, and his temper frank, loyal, and chivalrous. He excelled in athletic exercises, and surpassed most of the cavaliers of the court in wrestling, tilting, fencing, running at the ring, and in feats of horsemanship.[1] Yet though almost unrivalled in these manly accomplishments, for such they were deemed in Henry's day, the king's love of learning was profound, and much of his leisure was spent in the cultivation of letters. He was a fluent orator; his arguments were lucid and to the point, and his tact was never at fault. "The king possessed so much promptitude and readiness of mind that he surpassed in this rare endowment most of the learned personages of the era. He replied to the ambassadors deputed to his court by foreign princes with so much sagacity and learning that they were ravished with his eloquence. The torrent of his matchless learning broke upon them with such impetuosity that they were constrained to take refuge in silence, from their inability to elevate their answers to the soaring flights of that lofty and wonderful genius."[2] Tolerant in his religious opinions, Henry found delight and satisfaction in intimate companionship with his accomplished cousin. The warmest friendship soon united the two. With ardent enthusiasm the King of Navarre devoted himself to the service of King Francis; while in the Council, to please Marguerite, he exerted his influence to mitigate the severity of the edicts issued against the reformers.

Such intimate association with a princess young and brilliant as was the Duchess d'Alençon it was impossible to indulge in with impunity, and soon the most passionate attachment arose in Henry's heart for Marguerite. With the assent of the duchess, Henry boldly prayed Madame to bestow upon him her daughter's hand. At this period, however, it does not appear that Marguerite, who was absorbed by the negotiations pending for her brother's release, responded to Henry's attachment with the devotion of feeling which at a later period united them. Louisa received favourably the proposals of the King of Navarre, and

[1] Olhagaray, Hist. de Navarre. [2] Ibid.

she even commanded the marriage contract to be immediately drawn.[1] Many grave political motives induced the regent to give this ready acquiescence. When Marguerite quitted Madrid there seemed no prospect that the captivity of the king was likely to terminate. Her own health was failing, and her strength daily decreasing beneath the pressure of anxiety and the agony she endured from repeated attacks of the cruel malady which afflicted her. The Duchess d'Alençon was nominated by the king, in his act of abdication, to succeed to the regency of the kingdom in case necessity compelled Madame to relinquish her authority. Louisa felt that if her daughter were called to fill so responsible a post in the prime of her youth and beauty, she would need a protector, — one who by his position and talents could aid her in awing the turbulent parliament and universities, and perhaps in repressing the soaring ambition of the Duke de Vendôme, first prince of the blood, who would naturally claim a share of authority in the councils of the young monarch.

Before the expiration of the month of January, however, the negotiations at Madrid, unfortunately for the suit of the King of Navarre, reached a climax, which induced the regent to postpone her daughter's marriage until after the return of Francis, that his consent and approbation might be obtained. The contract was therefore laid aside, and all preparations for the solemnization of the nuptials — which Madame had intended to celebrate before the promulgation of the act of the king's abdication — were suspended. Marguerite, who yielded her assent at this time to her marriage more for the purpose of serving the policy of Madame and the interests of her country than from any personal feelings, saw with little regret the postponement of her alliance with Henry.[2] The King of Navarre, however, submitted with reluctance and foreboding to this

[1] Marguerite's marriage contract with the King of Navarre is dated January 3, 1526.

[2] Henry, King of Navarre, was eleven years younger than the Duchess d'Alençon. He was born April 3, 1503, in the town of Sanguessa, in Navarre. His godfathers were two German pilgrims who happened to be passing through Sanguessa at the time of his birth, on a pilgrimage to St. Iago de Compostella. One of the pilgrims was named Henry, the other Adam ; and their selection as sponsors to the little prince was a presage, the Spaniards say, of his future fate, — that of a pilgrim and outcast from his hereditary kingdom of Navarre.

inevitable delay of his nuptials; the ambition of Francis I., he feared, might aspire to elevate his beloved sister to a destiny more exalted than that of becoming the consort of a vassal of the crown of France, while Marguerite's submission to the king rendered it more than probable that she would render obedience to his will.

The French ambassadors in Spain, meanwhile, signed the treaty of Madrid in accordance with the mandate issued by Francis; and Monday, the 14th day of January, was the time appointed for its ratification by the sign manual of the king. Desirous of fulfilling every outward formality that might in any degree palliate the after evasion of the treaty, Francis, on the previous Sunday, assembled his ministers in the same chamber within which he had lain for days at the point of death, and renewed his solemn protest against the impossible and aggressive terms imposed by the emperor. The conference was conducted with solemn ceremony. An oath of secrecy was first administered by the President de Selve to all the personages present. They solemnly bound themselves never to reveal the proceeding about to be adopted by the king, excepting to Madame, to the Duchess d'Alençon, or those to whom the regent should authorize them to impart it. The king then, in an address of great length, recapitulated the concessions offered by him to the emperor, and dwelt on their harsh rejection, which left him no other alternative than that he was pursuing. He therefore declared any concessions about to be made by him to the prejudice of the rights, the honour, and the dignity of the crown of France null and void; but while he rejected all unreasonable demands, Francis promised religiously to execute the clauses of the treaty not affecting his kingly prerogatives, and to offer a sufficient ransom for the liberation of his sons. The king concluded his harangue by commanding the ambassadors to countersign the treaty to be presented on the morrow, under pain of his perpetual displeasure.[1]

The treaty of Madrid was accordingly signed, sealed, and affirmed on oath, on the following morning, by the King of France and his ambassadors, in the presence of the imperial

[1] Deuxième Protestation du Roi contre le Traité de Madrid, Docum. sur la Cap. de François, No. 222.

plenipotentiaries.[1] The Viceroy of Naples quitted Madrid immediately, to lay the treaty before the emperor at Toledo; while the Marshal de Montmorency set out for Lyons, where Madame was then sojourning. The safe conduct for Montmorency, which Francis solicited, had been at length conceded by the Imperial Council; its duration extended until the 30th day of January. It was granted, nevertheless, to veil Charles's ulterior intentions; for the emperor was resolved that Montmorency should not quit Spain before his royal master.

So carefully had the important secret of the king's protest been kept that not a rumour of it reached the emperor's ears; but Charles was apprehensive, as he well might be, lest the treaty of Madrid, when presented to the Council of State, should be peremptorily rejected, and the regent summoned to execute and proclaim the abdication of the crown by her son. The emperor had received private and certain information that this important document had not been carried into France by the Duchess d'Alençon, but that it was to be conveyed by the Marshal de Montmorency; that, simultaneously, the treaty of Madrid, or the abdication of the king, might be presented for the choice of Madame and her Council. This information, which the emperor obtained through his secret agents, was correct; for the Marshal de Montmorency quitted Madrid the bearer of both the important documents. Orders were immediately issued, directing Roquandolf, commander of the Spanish garrison of Perpignan, to arrest Montmorency as he passed through that city on his way to Salses, the first French frontier town of the county of Roussillon, and to detain him, in violation of his safe conduct, until fresh orders were transmitted by the Imperial Council.[2] The ulterior intentions of the emperor in giving these arbitrary directions are not very palpable. The marshal was on his way to obtain the ratification of the treaty which it had cost Charles so infinite an amount of diplomatic labour to extort; and Montmorency's arrest would certainly have had the effect of retarding the general pacification which the emperor always made a parade of his

[1] Journal des Itinéraires et Résidences de Charles Quint; Extrait des MSS. du Cardinal de Granvelle; Docum. sur la Captivité de François I., No. 224.

[2] Lettre de De la Barre, bailli de Paris, au Maréchal de Montmorency, Docum. sur la Cap. de François I., No. 226; Protestation du Roi contre le Traité de Madrid, Docum. sur la Cap. de François I., No. 222.

desire to promote. Neither, one would suppose, could the emperor have meditated so flagrant an outrage as to direct the forcible seizure of the act of abdication before the marshal was suffered to proceed on his mission. The most probable solution of the difficulty appears to be, that the emperor intended to detain Montmorency at Perpignan, while he despatched the treaty of Madrid by agents of his own to receive the ratification of the regent and her Council. Such a step answered a double purpose: in case of a renewed rupture with France, Montmorency would have remained a captive in the emperor's power, when his despatches might have been destroyed; while his temporary detention, pending the reception of the treaty by Madame, effectually prevented the entrance into France of the king's act of abdication. The emperor's measures for arresting the possible promulgation of this obnoxious document were admirably taken; and no indication escaped at Madrid or elsewhere to warn the king of the plot in contemplation. Montmorency, however, possessed great shrewdness of character; and his frequent experience of the artful devices resorted to by the imperial cabinet rendered him always distrustful and on his guard. Instead, therefore, of pursuing the route prescribed by the emperor in his safe conduct, through the kingdoms of Castile and Arragon, the principality of Catalonia, and the counties of Barcelona and Roussillon, the marshal boldly made for the kingdom of Navarre, passed the mountainous district of Jaca, and safely entered France by Béarn. Travelling thence with all speed, Montmorency arrived at Lyons on the 29th of January,[1] and placed before Madame the important despatches committed to his care by Francis.

From the moment that the emperor had extorted the king's signature to the treaty of Madrid, the most torturing indecision took possession of his mind. His faith in the stability of the convention just concluded vanished; and the sinister forebodings of Gattinara assumed the place of his late confident assertions as to the eventual execution of the treaty. To gain time, fresh obstacles were dishonourably raised by the Council; and it was signified to the French ambassadors De Selve and Bayard, who were still sojourning at Toledo, that the emperor would decline to ratify the treaty unless the king previously agreed to confer

[1] Protestation du Roi contre le Traité de Madrid, Docum. sur la Cap. de François I., No. 222.

upon the Duke de Bourbon the independent sovereignty of Provence, and to consent that the dauphin and his brother should be brought to Fuenterrabia, and consigned to the custody of the emperor, before Francis quitted Madrid.[1] These arbitrary and unreasonable proposals were peremptorily rejected by the king.

The utmost contention and diversity of opinion meanwhile prevailed amongst the emperor's advisers; the party hostile to the liberation of the king exhausted itself in remonstrances, intrigues, and plots, to obtain the rejection of the treaty and the detention of Francis. The Duke de Bourbon took an active share in these turbulent cabals: the Privy Council met frequently at his residence in Toledo, the palace of the Count de Cifuentes, to debate upon the measures to be submitted to the emperor. One by one, the duke beheld with indescribable mortification the emperor's brilliant promises fade away; the royal sceptre once designed for him, it was now scarcely a question whether to bestow. Charles's royal sister had, likewise, consented with alacrity to forsake him, and to become the bride of his injured sovereign; Madame Renée of France was denied to his renewed solicitations; and the hand he coveted most of all — that of the Duchess d'Alençon — was yet more out of his reach than ever. The emperor, it was true, soothed his irritated spirit by personal assurances that a splendid recompense yet awaited him; but Bourbon, in the imperial court, had to lower his pride, and to acquire the difficult virtues, for one of his towering arrogance, of submission and humility.

The emperor, meantime, in the depths of his convent palace of Toledo,[2] was silently and decisively forming his resolve relative to the king's release. Charles listened in silence to the predictions and denunciations of the political factions around; upon the decisions of his own powerful mind he fearlessly relied, without imparting their import even to his most tried and trusted counsellors. The consequences of a dishonourable refusal to ratify a treaty of his own dictation, so tardily and reluctantly agreed to by his captive, were revolved in every point of view.

[1] Lettre de Gilbert Bayard à M. de Montmorency, Docum. sur la Cap. de François I., No. 218.

[2] The emperor's abode at Toledo was in the monastery of St. Lazare. The sombre gloom of the cloister ever had peculiar attractions for Charles V., and for this reason he preferred the palaces of Spain to any other of his numerous residences.

The abdication of Francis, which the emperor knew was now in the hands of Madame, he doubted not would, on the rejection of the treaty, be accepted by the Council of State, by the advice and consent of the regent. The League in Italy flourished with double vigour since the decease of Pescara; and scarcely a despatch reached Toledo from his lieutenants without recording some defection from the imperial cause. Sforza, Duke of Milan, the nominal chief of the League amongst the potentates of Italy, still held out in the citadel of Milan against the imperialists. The pope — who with the wary policy of the Medici had temporized, hoping that some notable advantage for the Holy See might unfold itself, which he was ready to accept at the hands of Frenchmen or imperialists — now manifestly inclined towards the League, dazzled by the prospect of Italian unity. The King of England warmly solicited the liberation of Francis through his ambassadors; and Henry was not a prince to content himself with remonstrance only, if his mediation were repulsed. The event, however, which more directly vanquished the emperor's irresolution was the intelligence of the king's renewed illness. Dejected, and in despair at the obstacles so unreasonably raised by the emperor to his release, Francis again took to his bed with another attack of intermittent fever. The hostile attitude assumed by Charles since the signature of the treaty of Madrid was regarded by the king as significant of a design perpetually to immure him within the dismal towers of the Alcazar. The temporary fear this intelligence occasioned the emperor produced a favourable change in the prospects of Francis. A messenger was forthwith despatched by him to Madrid to the viceroy, authorizing the immediate betrothal of the Queen of Portugal to the king.

In obedience to the commands of his imperial master, the viceroy presented himself before Francis early on Sunday morning, January 20, equipped in boots, spurs, and cloak for a journey on horseback to Toledo. Without the least ceremony he approached the bed whereon Francis reposed, and, to the amazement of the king, informed him that by the emperor's command he came there as the proxy of Queen Eleanor to celebrate the ceremony of their affiancing. The king was too ill for remonstrance, and the ceremony was hastily performed on the instant, probably by the Bishop of Senlis, who remained in constant

attendance on his royal master.[1] The viceroy then took his leave, and hastened to Toledo; but his report of the king's health was so little satisfactory that the emperor thought it necessary to proceed at once to conclusive measures.

The Council, therefore, was immediately summoned, and the Treaty of Madrid once more discussed. The same violent debates ensued; Charles listened with impenetrable gravity. When the speakers had exhausted their eloquence the emperor addressed the Chancellor Gattinara, and in a firm voice desired him to seal the document; and at the same time he took up a pen and affixed to it his imperial signature. Gattinara was not a man to be daunted by the cold self-possession of his sovereign; he rose, therefore, and respectfully declined to affix his seal of office to a treaty he had so often denounced. The emperor made no reply, but, calmly taking the seal from Gattinara, affixed it himself to the treaty.[2] To Charles's honour, be it related, he testified no resentment at this refusal on the part of his chancellor to obey his will. On the following day the emperor quitted Toledo to visit his sister Eleanor, who was still sojourning at Talavera, probably to announce to her her accession of dignity as the betrothed bride of the King of France.

At Madrid, meantime, no relaxation of *surveillance* was permitted over the king. During the night subsequent to the departure of the viceroy a fire broke out in the Alcazar, and consumed a considerable portion of one wing appertaining to the imperial palace within that edifice. The flames penetrated to the king's chamber. It was found necessary to remove the furniture from the apartment; the arras hangings were torn from the walls, and even the king's bed was folded and conveyed away. This tumult was agony to Francis in the feeble and excitable state of his health, yet Alarçon churlishly refused to permit the removal of his royal prisoner to another apartment, despite the urgent solicitation of the Archbishop of Embrun. Alarçon, during the progress of the fire, stationed two Spanish officers inside the king's apartment, with peremptory orders not to lose sight of him for a second.[3] The rigour

[1] Procès-verbal du traitement fait à François I. en Espagne depuis la signature du Traité de Madrid, Docum. sur la Cap. de François I., No. 242.

[2] Gailliard, Hist. de François I.; Mezeray.

[3] Procès-verbal du traitement fait à François I. en Espagne depuis la signature du Traité de Madrid, Docum. sur la Cap. de François I., No. 242.

with which the king was treated relaxed somewhat after his recovery, and he was permitted to pay visits in Madrid, and to make pilgrimages to the various monasteries and nunneries of the city, into the interior of which his kingly rank procured him admission. Meanwhile, Francis despatched Brion to Toledo with letters of compliment to the emperor, and to his affianced bride Queen Eleanor, whom he had not as yet addressed in that relation. So uncertain, however, did the king feel of the emperor's sincerity and good faith, that he consulted the viceroy as to the style and title he ought to give Eleanor. The viceroy cautiously replied "that before he wrote to the queen, his Majesty had better ascertain the emperor's pleasure on the subject." Brion accordingly was instructed by his royal master to make this somewhat derogatory inquiry. The emperor replied, in oracular language, that "Queen Eleanor was his sister, but that the king had his permission to call her wife, since such she was to him."[1] Encouraged by Charles's imperial permission, Francis despatched his letter to the queen, which was duly responded to by her in affectionate terms. Francis had never yet been introduced to his betrothed bride; he therefore impatiently awaited the arrival of the emperor at Madrid, who had brought his sister from Talavera[2] to Illescas purposely to present her to the king.

On Monday, January 28, Francis went to the church of Notre Dame d'Atocha in his litter to hear vespers, and to return thanks for the recovery of his health. He was enthusiastically greeted by the people of Madrid during his progress to the church, and on his return. On the following day he heard mass in a private chapel of the palace of a certain countess, whose name is not recorded, though probably it was the Countess of Saldaña: this lady was one of the stanchest friends Francis possessed in Spain. The king dined and spent the afternoon in the society of the countess, and in the evening he accompanied her to visit a convent, where, at the solicitations of the nuns, he touched more than thirty persons for the Evil.[3]

[1] Lettre du Bailli de Paris, De la Barre, à Madame la Duchesse d'Alençon, Docum. sur la Cap. de François I., No. 232.

[2] The Duke de Bourbon was compelled by the express command of the emperor to receive Eleanor on her public entry into Toledo on her way to Illescas as Queen of France.

[3] Lettre du Bailli de Paris, De la Barre, à Madame d'Alençon.

The emperor, meanwhile, still delayed his journey to Madrid. The magnitude of the concessions which he had wrested from the king filled him with disquietude. "This treaty, will it be faithfully and literally executed?" was his perpetual demand to the French envoys at Toledo. Anxiously the emperor watched the effect produced by the Treaty of Madrid on the parliaments of France. No murmurs of opposition, however, arose there as to its harsh exactions; it was received also both by the Council of State and the parliament of Paris in silent acquiescence. This submissive compliance on the part of that turbulent body to the clauses of a compact which separated whole provinces from the crown, was felt by Charles and his Council to be a fact of ominous import. The states of Burgundy, likewise, the assembly most concerned in the execution of the treaty, evinced no sign of approbation or displeasure at a convention which transferred their allegiance from the Valois to the chief of the House of Hapsburg. It was even reported that this policy emanated from the secret instructions of Madame, and the counsels of the Duchess d'Alençon. The preliminary measures for the execution of the treaty, however, were diligently commenced by Madame; and such was her alacrity that she set out from Blois, accompanied by Marguerite and the two little princes, who were to be consigned as hostages to dreary captivity in Spain, before the emperor visited Madrid to announce officially to the king his liberation.

The emperor had committed himself so far that he found it impossible to recede from the negotiation, though he would now willingly have done so. On Shrove Tuesday, February 13, he therefore arrived in Madrid, and was received by Francis at the gate of Toledo, accompanied by Alarçon, at the head of two hundred guards and three hundred foot soldiers. Suspicious and ungracious to the last, Charles had not generosity enough to relieve the king from the irksome *surveillance* of Alarçon. Even when the emperor rode through the streets of Madrid, side by side with Francis, or while he conferred with him in private, the detachment of soldiers on guard was never withdrawn.[1] The rapacity which Charles displayed in persisting in

[1] Procès-verbal du traitement fait à François I. en Espagne après la signature du Traité de Madrid, Docum. sur la Cap. de François I., No. 242; Ferreras, Hist. de España.

his exactions to the very last moment of the sojourn of the king in Spain is astonishing. Though so many external indications existed which seemed to throw doubt on the future execution of the treaty, Charles, at every interview he had with the king, unblushingly asked for more. Now, it was the donation of a certain estate in France, which the emperor prayed the king, out of affection to his imperial person, to grant to one of the Spanish courtiers; then, a pension he craved for one of his Flemish subjects, or some privilege he requested for another, relative to the traffic carried on on the French line of the frontier. During his first interview with Francis the emperor imparted the pleasant tidings that he had granted the investiture of the duchy of Milan for life to the Duke de Bourbon, whom he had despatched to dethrone Sforza,[1] and to take possession of the Milanese. He then reminded the king of his engagement to reinstate the duke in his forfeited possessions in France; he moreover requested him to bestow a pension of 20,000 livres on Bourbon, pending the decision of the parliament of Paris on the duke's claims to Provence. The emperor condescendingly added "that if the king found it disagreeable to pay the pension himself to Bourbon, he might hand it over to the imperial treasury, from whence it would be delivered to the duke."[2] Francis, whose chivalrous faith had succumbed beneath the exigencies of his position, unhesitatingly promised all, without having the least intention of keeping his word after his return to France. Suspicious and wary, the emperor in his most plausible tones, to test the extent of the king's compliance, then requested Francis, as a special favour to himself, to consent to the erection of Provence into an independent sovereignty in France for Bourbon. The king had the policy and presence of mind to return a direct and decisive refusal to this demand. The emperor, with great suavity of manner, next asked the king not to deny him a thing he had much at heart, which was that Francis would bestow the manors and lordship of St. Dizier on his faithful chamberlain in ordinary, the Sieur de Vergey, whose ancestors some centuries back were subjects of France, and possessed claims over the

[1] The Duke de Bourbon quitted Spain Feb. 12, 1526.

[2] Procès-verbal du traitement fait à François I., Docum. sur la Cap. de François I., No. 242.

lands he demanded.[1] Francis assured the emperor that his suit for his chamberlain should be granted.

Many of the principal Spanish courtiers followed the example set them by their imperial master, and importuned Francis for grants and favours; so that had the king adhered to the numerous promises made by him when in Spain, little more of France than his hereditary patrimony of Angoulême would have remained to him.

On Friday, February 16th, the emperor, accompanied by Francis, quitted Madrid. They dined together at a place called St. Yestaphe; from whence they proceeded to Torrejon de Velasco, a strong fortress situated a few leagues from Madrid, where they spent the night. Francis travelled, surrounded by his usual escort. Not content with this public mark of distrust of a king, then his brother-in-law, and with whom he had just signed a treaty of peace, the emperor commanded the advance of the battalion of infantry constantly on guard round the Alcazar of Madrid; so that with drums beating and colours flying, these troops entered Torrejon with Francis.[2]

The following day, Saturday, February 17th, the emperor conducted the king to Illescas, where Queen Eleanor was sojourning. The queen, accompanied by Germaine de Foix, queen dowager of Arragon,[3] and attended by the Marchioness de Ceñete, Countess of Nassau,[4] received the emperor and the King of France at the foot of the stairs ascending to the grand gallery of the castle. Eleanor stood a step in advance, having Queen Germaine on her right, and the Constable of Castile, Don Hernandez Velasco, Duke de Frias, on her left. The emperor presented the king to his sister. Eleanor courtesied profoundly, and stooped to kiss the king's hand. Francis, however, gallantly advanced and embraced his promised bride, then offering his

[1] Procès-verbal du traitement fait à François I., Docum. sur la Cap. de Fran. I., No. 242.

[2] Procès-verbal du traitement fait au roi en Espagne, &c., Docum. sur la Cap. de François I., No. 242.

[3] Widow of Ferdinand the Catholic, and niece of Louis XII., King of France.

[4] Donna Mencia de Mendoza, Marquesa de Ceñete, third wife of the Count de Nassau. The count espoused, first, Louise Françoise, daughter of Jacques de Savoie, Count de Romont; and, secondly, in 1515, Claude, sister of the Prince of Orange. The son of the Count de Nassau, by Claude de Chalons, inherited the principality of Orange at the decease of his uncle.

hand to Eleanor, he led her into the saloon, followed by the emperor and Queen Germaine. At the upper end of the hall four chairs stood beneath a rich dais: the king seated himself by Eleanor, while the emperor placed the Queen of Arragon on his right. A ceremonious conversation then ensued between these four royal personages, which lasted a considerable time; after which there was an entertainment of dancing and singing. The emperor then took his leave, and, accompanied by Francis, returned to Torrejon, at which place they did not arrive before the hour of one in the morning. The following day the two monarchs paid a second visit to Illescas. Eleanor, at the request of her brother, danced a Spanish couranto, which was greatly applauded by the king.[1] The fastidious taste of Francis seemed, on the whole, gratified by his interviews with Eleanor; and he expressed himself so warmly to the emperor on the subject of the queen's speedy arrival in France, that Charles began to put greater faith in the king's sincerity.

The next day, Monday, February 19, the emperor formally signified to Francis that he was at liberty to depart for Fuenterrabia, where his exchange for the princes was to take place. Charles conducted the king about a mile on the road from Torrejon, and the two monarchs took leave of each other with great ceremony and demonstrations of affection and sorrow.[2] It is related that before they parted Charles suddenly checked his horse, and turning towards the king said to him, with earnest gravity: "My brother, you are now free, and your liberty can no more be in peril. We have hitherto treated together as princes; let us now speak as gentlemen. Confess to me, therefore, on the faith and honour of a true cavalier, whether it is your intention to execute our treaty." This colloquy took place beneath a lofty cross, standing by the roadside. Francis, pointing upwards to it, took again, it is said, a solemn oath to execute the treaty in its minutest detail. "Then, if you fail to do so," rejoined the emperor, "I may say that you have been as false to your honour as to the treaty?" "You may say so," replied the king; and with these words the two monarchs separated.[3]

[1] Rélation de ce qui passa à Madrid entre le roi et l'empereur, depuis la signature du traité de Madrid, Docum. sur la Cap. de Fran. I., No. 241.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Antonio de Véra, Historia de Carlos V.; Sandoval, Hist. del Emperador Carlos V., lib. xiv.

This story is nowhere corroborated by documentary evidence. Its origin is clearly traced to Spanish historians, who vie with each other in heaping odium on the king for his breach of the treaty. Antonio de Véra, the servile panegyrist of Charles V., whose history of this prince is a tissue of fictitious events, is the earliest author who recounts this anecdote, and who, in his animosity towards Francis, leaves nothing unsaid to augment the culpability of the king's evasion of his oath. From Torrejon Francis was conducted to his old lodging in the Alcazar of Madrid. The emperor had promised that he should immediately proceed to the frontier; but on his arrival at Madrid the soldiers clamorously demanded some arrears of pay owing to them. Alarçon, in consequence of the mutiny, refused to proceed until the day but one following, in order to afford time for the advance of fresh troops to form the king's escort, so fearful was he that Francis might avail himself of the disaffection of the soldiers to escape.[1]

On Wednesday, the 21st, Francis finally quitted Madrid, where he had spent the most weary and grievous period of his captivity, and travelled as far as the little town of St. Augustine, a distance of eighteen miles. He proceeded the next day to a mansion belonging to the Duke de Infantado, where he was most hospitably and magnificently entertained. The duke gave a grand hunt for the king's diversion; and Francis shot the stag with a cross-bow.[2] The king then proceeded to Burgos, being enthusiastically received on his route. As he approached the French frontier, however, the viceroy caused the king's guards to be augmented, while his actions were watched with the utmost vigilance. At St. Sebastian, Francis was refused the privilege hitherto accorded him of attending mass publicly; and by order of the viceroy it was privately celebrated in the king's chamber.[3]

From St. Sebastian, De la Barre wrote to Duprat,[4] by the direction of Francis, to enclose a memorandum which the king made of the presents he wished to bestow on the Spanish noble-

[1] Rélation de ce qui passa à Madrid entre le roi et l'empereur après la signature du traité de Madrid, Docum. sur la Cap. de François I., No. 241–2 [2] Ibid.

[3] Procès-verbal du traitement fait à François I. en Espagne, &c., Docum. sur la Cap. de François I., No. 244.

[4] Docum. sur la Cap. de François I., No. 245.

men and others, who had served about his royal person during his captivity. The gifts are on a scale of munificent liberality. The king directed Madame to forward, in his name, to Alarçon, governor of the garrison of Madrid, — whose severity of discipline the king had often painfully experienced, — silver vessels for the table, the most exquisite that could be procured, to the value of three thousand crowns. The king desired that a chain of fine workmanship, worth two thousand crowns, should be sent to him by Madame, and a gold cup, of the value of one thousand crowns, from the Duchess d'Alençon. The captains of the guard and their lieutenants, the inferior officers of the household, appointed him while in Spain, the secretaries of the viceroy and of Alarçon, were all remembered by Francis, and rewarded with chains, averaging in value from two to three hundred crowns. The viceroy himself was presented with estates in Flanders to a considerable amount. On a certain captain, who had presented the king with two horses, Francis bestowed a gold chain worth six hundred crowns.

Eleanor, meanwhile, quitted Illescas, and, escorted by the Constable of Castile, slowly approached the frontier. Francis wrote to the emperor from St. Sebastian, to request that her journey might be hastened, so that the queen might arrive in France before Passion Week.[1] In this letter the king again promises, somewhat gratuitously, to execute the treaty. On the 16th of March Francis reached Fuenterrabia. In the centre of the little river Bidassoa, flowing between the confines of France and Spain, a barge had been moored. About seven o'clock in the morning of Saturday, the 17th, Francis appeared on the left bank of the river, attended by the Viceroy of Naples, the Constable of Castile, and fifty mounted cavaliers. The Marshal de Lautrec, accompanied by the dauphin and his brother, and a similar escort, presented himself simultaneously on the French side of the river. Francis, the viceroy, Alarçon, and the constable, with eight soldiers, entered a boat, and rowed towards the barge. The Marshal de Lautrec and the royal children, accompanied by a like number of guards, did so likewise. The exchange was made in a few seconds: the king precipitately entered Lautrec's boat, which made for the French

[1] Lettre de François I. à Charles Quint, Docum. sur la Cap. de François I., No. 246.

bank of the river.[1] Francis was not even permitted to embrace his children, so fearful were the Spaniards of sinister designs. It had been stipulated that none of the gentlemen of the royal household, and not even Madame herself, should advance nearer the frontier than Bayonne. The king mounted a fleet horse in waiting for him, and waving his hat, exclaimed, "Once more a king!" and rode off at full gallop to St. Jean de Luz. He was accompanied by the President de Selve, the Bishop of Senlis, and other of the French ambassadors. The king dined at St. Jean de Luz, and afterwards proceeded to Bayonne, which town, amidst the tears, plaudits, and rejoicings of the people, he entered about three in the afternoon. He was received publicly by Madame, by the Duchess d'Alençon, and the whole court, with the utmost ceremony and magnificence. Before he yielded to the delights of his restoration to the society of his beloved mother and sister, Francis desired to tender public thanks to God for his deliverance and safe return to his kingdom. Accompanied, therefore, by his court, Francis, before he exchanged a word in private with the regent or his sister, repaired to the cathedral, where he assisted most devoutly at a solemn service and Te Deum.[2]

The dauphin and his brother, meanwhile, on reaching the Spanish territory, were delivered by the viceroy to the custody of the Constable of Castile, who forthwith gave De Lannoy a written discharge.[3] The princes were attended by a numerous train, as became their rank. Mademoiselle de Chavigny was nominated their preceptress, and chief of the household; for it was felt that the children, during their dreary exile, would need feminine sympathy and care. The father of the celebrated poet Ronsard was appointed first maître-d'hotel to the Duke of Orleans. The Constable of Castile conducted the princes and their train to Vittoria, where Queen Eleanor was sojourning, awaiting the confirmation of the treaty of Madrid to enter France.

The day following the king's arrival the emperor's ambas-

[1] Lettre du président de Selve au parlement de Paris, Docum. sur la Cap. de François I., No. 247; Cérémonial réglé pour la délivrance du roi, ibid., No. 243.

[2] Lettre du président de Selve au parlement, Docum. sur la Cap. de François I., No. 247.

[3] Journal des Itinéraires et Résidences de Charles Quint; Docum. sur la Cap. de François I., No. 244.

sador at the court of Madame, the Sieur de Präet, presented himself at Bayonne, to demand the ratification of the treaty of Madrid, which Francis had bound himself to give on entering the first town of his dominions.[1] The king absolutely declined the demand, excusing himself on the plea that it was necessary first to obtain the sanction of the states of Burgundy before ceding the duchy to the imperial commissioners. This refusal filled De Lannoy with consternation, corroborative as it was of the predictions of Gattinara and of his faction in the imperial cabinet. Leaving Eleanor and the princes, therefore, at Vittoria, the viceroy, in his zeal for his imperial master's service, crossed the frontier, and trusting to the friendship of Francis, appeared without safe conduct at Bayonne, to persuade the king to maintain the trêaty. Francis again peremptorily excused himself. The viceroy then rejoined the emperor, who was sojourning at Grenada, while the dauphin and his brother were conveyed, under a strong escort, to Valladolid, and Queen Eleanor returned to Illescas.

The Duchess d'Alençon, meanwhile, felt at the summit of happiness by the restoration of her brother to his family and country. The health of Madame, which before the return of Francis excited serious apprehension, revived beneath the happiness diffused by the presence of the king; for as Marguerite vividly expressed it, he was "le soleil qui la faisoit revivre." Francis sojourned at Bayonne for six weeks; he then removed to Mont de Marsan,[2] on his way to Cognac, to receive the embassy about to be despatched from Spain by the irate emperor. Before his departure from Bayonne, Francis filled the offices of state vacant by the disastrous slaughter at Pavia. Madame purposely refrained from bestowing these high dignities, in order that her son might reward, in a notable manner, those who had proved most faithful during his season of adversity. On the favoured Montmorency was bestowed the office of grand master of the king's household and the government of Languedoc.[3] Brion was promoted, much to the discomfiture of Montmorency, to the post of admiral, vacant by the death of the rash and

[1] Journal des Itinéraires et Résidences de Charles Quint; Docum. sur la Cap. de François I., No. 244.

[2] Belleforest, Hist. de France.

[3] Mém. de Martin Du Bellay.

unfortunate Bonnivet; he had likewise the government of Burgundy confided to him, at which the emperor's ambassador indignantly expostulated, as the Prince of Orange[1] was on his way to Dijon to act as imperial lieutenant over the duchy, in virtue of the convention of Madrid. To Madame, his indefatigable and admirable mother, the king avowed himself powerless to express sufficient gratitude and respect. Greater honours or more ample authority he could not bestow upon her; but from thenceforth the king's ministers knew that the will expressed by Madame was still more entirely adopted by Francis, and that the highest seat at the Council board of France, from which with such signal ability she had counteracted the emperor's aggressive policy, was not relinquished by her, but shared only with her son. On Marguerite the king bestowed the revenues and the administration of the duchy of Alençon for life, which had lapsed, as a fief of the crown, to Francis, on the decease of the Duke d'Alençon. In her own right Marguerite was now Duchess d'Alençon and De Berry, and Countess d'Armagnac. She enjoyed the revenues and exercised an independent authority respecting internal affairs over these duchies. She had the right of nominating and dismissing all public functionaries, excepting the military officers immediately appointed by the king to serve under his governors of the various provinces; she presented to the vacant professorships in the colleges within her duchies, and also exercised a certain extent of ecclesiastical patronage.

It was while sojourning at Mont de Marsan, in Upper Gascony, with his mother and sister, that Francis became susceptible to an attachment the baneful effects of which tarnished the lustre of his reign, and eventually proved the source of much domestic misery and national calamity. Amongst the maids of honour in attendance on the Duchess d'Angoulême was Anne de Pisseleu de Heilly,[2] a young lady of high birth,

[1] Philibert de Chalons quitted the service of Francis upon some imaginary affront in 1517, and entered the imperial army. His principality of Orange was confiscated. The prince himself was detained a prisoner at Bourges, having been captured by the fleet of Andrea Doria during the captivity of Francis I. He was liberated at the solicitation of the emperor.

[2] Anne de Pisseleu was daughter of Guillaume de Pisseleu, Seigneur de Heilly, by his second wife, Anne Sanguin. The Seigneur de Heilly was married three times, and had thirty children, all of whom lived to a good old age. Mademoiselle de Heilly's only portion, therefore, was her beauty.

but of impoverished fortunes. She had entered the service of the duchess just before the king's departure on his disastrous campaign, and it is thought that Francis even then was not insensible to her charms. Mademoiselle de Heilly was beautiful, ambitious, and unprincipled; she was distinguished among her companions for grace, wit, and a certain piquant carelessness of manner in addressing her superiors, which the king found irresistibly fascinating. During the king's absence the Countess de Chateaubriand had disappeared from court, to die heart-broken[1] and in misery, a few years subsequently, at her husband's château in Bretagne, who was strongly suspected of having hastened her end. The untimely fate of the beautiful Madame de Chateaubriand made no impression on the ambitious and volatile spirit of Mademoiselle de Heilly; her conquest, therefore, was soon complete, and her smiles banished from the memory of Francis the recollection of the engagements he had contracted with the sister of the emperor, — ties which his enmity to Charles rendered repulsive and irksome.

The extent of Mademoiselle de Heilly's influence over the king soon became apparent to the courtiers, who speedily gratified her ambition by their obsequious homage, — the more especially as Madame evinced no signs of anger or displeasure at the elevation of a new favourite. More supple and dexterous than her unfortunate predecessor, Madame de Chateaubriand, — who, relying on her princely birth and on the support of her two valiant brothers, the Marshals de Lautrec and de Foix, defied Louisa's enmity, — Mademoiselle de Heilly professed unbounded submission and deference for Madame. The king was no longer, as before, tormented by the bitter feuds which always existed between his mother and the Countess de Chateaubriand; his new favourite's refined wit and lively manner were, therefore, the more welcome, as she exercised both in strict subordination to the will of Madame. Marguerite had previously bestowed considerable notice on Mademoiselle de Heilly, whose education was superior to that of most of the ladies at court; she was, moreover, inclined towards the reformed doctrines, which always acted as a powerful attraction to the duchess in the formation of her friendships. Mademoiselle de Heilly's altered position did not outwardly alienate Marguerite's regard; her fondness for

[1] Madame de Chateaubriand died October 16, 1537.

her brother ever induced her to palliate and screen his faults, and, at the king's request, the duchess was often culpably yielding in making compromise with her conscience. From the submissive deference which she invariably manifested for the king arose most of Marguerite's errors: ever fearfully apprehensive of offending or grieving him, her anxiety reveals itself in her compliance with his most trifling desires.

Under her maiden appellation, Mademoiselle de Heilly preserved her position for some years at court; but as her power and influence augmented, so in the same degree did her ambition, and she importuned Francis to bestow upon her proportionate rank. For some unknown reason the king did not avail himself of his prerogative to bestow a peerage upon his mistress; but he sought for her a matrimonial alliance which would elevate her to the rank she coveted at court. None of the courtiers, profligate and time-serving as many of them were, proved base enough to lend themselves to the king's designs. At length, after much negotiation, Mademoiselle de Heilly was married to Jean de la Brosse,[1] heir of the noble house of Penthièvre, and son of René de la Brosse, whose great possessions had been confiscated for the part he took in the rebellion of the Constable de Bourbon. Francis offered, with the hand of Mademoiselle de Heilly, the restitution of the count's patrimony. The Count de Penthièvre, who was wandering poor and friendless amongst the various continental courts of Europe, at length reluctantly consented to accept the king's proposal. The marriage was celebrated in 1536, when the count was created Duke d'Estampes, to give his wife the rank of a duchess at court. A few months subsequently, the king, as a further reward, and to remove the duke from court, elevated him to the dignity of governor of the province of Britanny.[2] Throughout the reign of Francis, the Duchess d'Estampes plays a conspicuous part, as her favour always remained in the ascendant; she was often

[1] Jean de la Brosse was the grandson of the famous historian Philippe de Commines.

[2] The king also conferred the Order of St. Michael upon the Duke d'Estampes. Brantôme relates that one day the duke was boastfully exhibiting the splendid collar of the order which he wore, and said, addressing himself to the Count de la Châteigneraie, "Ah! what would you not give to have this order suspended from your neck like myself?" "Yes, I should like it," replied the count; "but I would sooner die than obtain the honour by the same means that you did."

consequently brought into close connection with Marguerite; but governed by the same policy which induced her at first to bow before the pre-eminent authority of Madame, she always carefully abstained from incurring the enmity of the king's sister.

The assiduities of the King of Navarre to win the favourable regard of Marguerite greatly augmented after the return of her brother from captivity. Constantly in each other's society during the few weeks which the king spent in comparative retirement, Marguerite soon became sensible of the sympathy which united them. While sojourning in the dominions of the King of Navarre, at Mont de Marsan, the duchess beheld the attachment felt by the people for their sovereign; and, consulted by Henry in all his projects for the happiness of his subjects, Marguerite insensibly found her thoughts and pursuits combine with his. Francis, however, looked disapprovingly on the suit of the King of Navarre; and this was sufficient to prevent its positive encouragement on Marguerite's part. In his anger at the treatment he had experienced from the emperor, Francis meditated signal retaliation; and the disposal of the hand of his sister, which had been tacitly refused by Charles, was a weapon designed by the king to inflict a deep and lasting wound.

The first care of the king after arriving at Bayonne had been to write a letter full of thanks and affectionate expressions of everlasting gratitude to Henry VIII., to whose faithful friendship and good offices Francis in a great measure attributed his release from captivity and the preservation of his kingdom. This epistle was crossed by a missive sent by the King of England to Bayonne, to greet Francis on his arrival; it was received, however, five days after that event. The protestations of attachment and perpetual alliance interchanged by the two monarchs would have created indescribable consternation in the imperial cabinet, could they have been perused there.

Francis immediately confirmed the treaty of Moore,[1] concluded between the regent and the King of England, and commanded that the secret protest inserted on the registers of the parliament

[1] The treaty of Moore was signed August 30, 1525. In the treaty the regent signed an acknowledgment of the vast sum of two millions and fifty-two thousand golden crowns, as owing by her son to the King of England, and against which enormous debt the parliament secretly protested.

of Paris against the terms of the alliance should be expunged. At the same time he issued a similar mandate for the effacement from the parliamentary registers of the proceedings instituted during his absence against Duprat, who, at the recommendation of Madame, was received into increased favour; the king also accompanied his missive by an intimation, declaring in express terms that the parliament possessed no jurisdiction over the Chancellor of France.[1]

The renewal of the intimate alliance between the crowns of France and England inspired the two monarchs with a desire to return to the convention negotiated by the Admiral de Bonnivet in 1518, and which was publicly proclaimed during the pompous pageant of the Field of the Cloth of Gold. The seal of that treaty was the union of the Princess Mary of England with the dauphin Francis. Mary's betrothment to the heir of France had been solemnized in the presence of the French ambassadors, with all due formality and magnificence.[2] The subsequent rupture between her royal father and the King of France caused her hand, in defiance of this solemn engagement, to be bestowed by the treaty of Windsor on the Emperor Charles V. Charles, in his turn, violated his compact by espousing Isabella of Portugal, and was at this very time engaged at Grenada in the celebration of his nuptials with the beautiful Portuguese princess.[3] The resentment felt by both the French and English monarchs still more disposed them to return to the stipulations of their first and closest alliance. It had been previously agreed that immediately after the ceremony of her betrothal Mary should take up her abode at the French court, to be educated under the guidance of Madame, and in the society of her future consort. This treaty being again adopted, in utter disregard of the recent engagements contracted for the dauphin with the infanta of Portugal, — with the reservation on the part of Francis which will be immediately detailed, — the Bishop of Tarbes, a

[1] Gailliard, Hist. de François I.

[2] Hume.

[3] The emperor's marriage was solemnized at Grenada, March 10, 1526. On her wedding-day the emperor gave Isabella the three Graces for her device. One of the sisters was represented carrying roses, the second bore a sprig of myrtle, and the third a branch of oak, laden with acorns, — emblems of the empress's beauty, fecundity, and of her husband's unchanging love. The whole was surrounded by the motto, "Hæc habet et superat."

devoted partisan of Marguerite's, and who, as one of the ambassadors accredited by Madame to the emperor, had eminently served the king, was despatched to London, at the head of a splendid embassy, to demand permission to conduct the princess to Paris.

A rumour, meantime, reached the ears of Francis, or rather it is affirmed that the fact was imparted to him in confidence by Cardinal Wolsey, of Henry's daily increasing abhorrence of his consort, Catherine of Arragon, aunt to the emperor, and of the projects of divorce which the king consequently entertained. The possible repudiation of the Queen of England, on the ground of the illegality of her marriage with the brother of her first husband, Prince Arthur, and the consequent aspersion of illegitimacy which would brand her only daughter, Mary, whose degradation from her lofty position as heiress-presumptive of the English crown must follow, indisposed Francis, much as he desired Henry's alliance, to conclude the marriage of the princess with his eldest son. To the Bishop of Tarbes, therefore, was intrusted the difficult diplomatic mission of appearing in London apparently with the sole intent of urging Henry and his minister, by every possible argument, to consent to the immediate departure of the princess for the court of France; while, in reality, the bishop's secret instructions gave him emphatic injunctions to retard this event, and, on the contrary, to exhort Henry to persevere in his design of repudiating Queen Catherine; in which case Francis professed himself ready to bestow upon the king the hand of the Duchess d'Alençon, and to marry the Princess Mary himself, or to give her to his second son, the Duke of Orleans.[1] Francis undertook also to aid Henry in procuring the papal sanction to his divorce from the emperor's aunt, and to conclude the closest fraternal alliance possible with the future husband of his cherished sister. Wolsey entered with alacrity into this project, so discreditable to the reputation of Francis: the king, in his blind resentment against the emperor, forgot how he was compromising Marguerite, and doing cruel wrong to Queen Catherine, who hailed with delight the contemplated alliance of her daughter with the royal House of Valois. A portrait of Marguerite, attired in her widow's robes, which became her so well, was procured by Wolsey from Paris,

[1] Varillas, Hist. de l'Hérésie; Rapin.

and shown to Henry,[1] who had always expressed great admiration for the duchess.

The Bishop of Tarbes, meanwhile, publicly demanded permission of Henry and his Council to convey the Princess Mary to St. Germain. Wolsey replied, by command of the king, "that the English would view the removal of their princess from the kingdom with grave anger and indignation until she was of suitable age to contract immediate marriage with the dauphin, and therefore his royal master could not comply with the demand made by the King of France." This reply, of course, was not combated by the Bishop of Tarbes, who, a few days subsequently, with the assent and connivance of Wolsey, obtained a private audience with Henry, and eloquently admonished him to proceed forthwith in preferring a suit for divorce from his queen to the Holy See, that he might be at liberty to espouse the sister of the Christian king.[2] To render his admonitions the more effectual, the bishop boldly argued the matter of Mary's legitimacy, which he averred was liable to be seriously assailed, and hinted that the premature deaths of the sons borne to him by Catherine might be ascribed to the Divine displeasure at his unlawful marriage with his brother's widow. Henry feigned surprise at the bishop's address, and after a little reflection he promised to appoint commissioners to examine the matter.[3]

Henry VIII. was as impatient as the Bishop of Tarbes could desire to rend asunder the bonds which united him to Catherine of Arragon; but his eagerness arose, not, as Wolsey believed, from a desire to espouse the Duchess d'Alençon, but in order to elevate Anne Boleyn to share his throne, who had been maid of honour to Marguerite after the decease of her first royal mistress, Queen Claude. With the duplicity inspired by his dread of the steady opposition which the flagrant act of injustice he meditated towards his estimable queen would meet with, especially when she was to be dethroned to elevate so volatile a lady as Anne Boleyn, Henry feigned a great desire to accomplish his union with the Duchess d'Alençon. The king was also aware that he required all Wolsey's influence at Rome to procure the papal assent to the dissolution of his marriage with Catherine, which the cardinal would indignantly withhold if his true designs

[1] Varillas, Hist. de l'Hérésie. [2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid.; Hume; Gailliard; Rapin.

transpired. For the same reason that Henry suffered Wolsey to proceed to some lengths in his negotiations for the hand of the duchess, did he refuse to permit Mary to be consigned to the guardianship of the King of France. He knew that when once the princess was irrevocably affianced to the dauphin, Francis would traverse in every possible way the design of divorcing Catherine, in order that Mary's eventual succession to the crown of England might not be endangered, and to testify his resentment at the preference of another before the Duchess d'Alençon.

Marguerite is much to be pitied for the unceremonious manner in which her hand was offered, — first by King Louis to Henry, when Prince of Wales, then by her mother and her brother to the emperor, and again to Henry VIII., — without her alliance having been previously sought by these princes, or her feelings consulted. This second undignified negotiation with Henry VIII. doubtless occasioned her unmitigated sorrow and disgust, the more acute, also, as a sincere attachment now united her to the gallant young King of Navarre. Her womanly dignity and self-respect had received a sharp wound when the lofty Duchess d'Angoulême could be induced by the pressure of national calamity, however severe, to condescend to the remark, "that she would be very happy if her daughter should prove acceptable and agreeable to his imperial Majesty." Dearly as the King of France loved his sister, there is something selfish in his affection for her, which contrasts painfully with the noble devotion Marguerite ever evinced towards him.

Marguerite conducted herself throughout these negotiations with prudence and dignity. As she was powerless to arrest their progress, she carefully avoided giving the king's projects even a seeming sanction, by word or deed. Much that was annoying to the duchess personally clouded the first months of her reunion with her brother. Her attachment to the King of Navarre, which was thwarted by Francis without any regard to her feelings on the subject, the negotiation to obtain for her the crown matrimonial of England, and the vexatious contests which arose, immediately that the patent passed the great seal bestowing upon her the duchy of Alençon, between the co-heiresses of the Duke d'Alençon, — disputes in which she was necessarily involved, — cast an evident gloom over her spirits. "Mon-

seigneur," writes Marguerite to the king, probably from Argentan where these luckless disputes had compelled her to journey, "your letter, I assure you, arrived in my need, to console me for the vexations which have oppressed me for many days past, perceiving, as I do, that the confidence which you have always bestowed upon me is no whit diminished for the reasons that may have been assigned to you; this has given me such joy that I neither have nor can have other intention than to follow implicitly your will and designs."[1] Marguerite in this passage alluded perhaps to a misunderstanding that may have arisen between Francis and herself relative to her attachment to the King of Navarre, and her disapproval of the unprincipled intrigues that the Bishop of Tarbes was instructed to carry on at the English court.

Francis, meanwhile, accompanied by Madame, removed from Mont de Marsan to Cognac. It is uncertain whether the Duchess d'Alençon was then with her brother; judging from the allusions in her letters to Montmorency and others at this period, the probability is that she took up her abode at St. Germain-en-Laye after making a brief sojourn at Argentan.

Soon after the arrival of the court at Cognac the king met with a severe accident by a fall from his horse while hunting.[2] So seriously was he hurt that for some hours his life was considered to be in danger. Francis was scarcely convalescent when the ambassadors sent by the emperor arrived at Cognac, to demand the king's final intentions relative to the ratification of the treaty of Madrid. The embassy consisted of the Viceroy of Naples, Don Ugo de Monçada, and of Alarçon, attended by a numerous train of subordinate personages. The king and Madame overwhelmed the viceroy with honours and marks of distinguished favour; but Francis refused to give a more explicit statement of his intentions until the states of Burgundy notified their decision. The court at Cognac, meantime, continued a very focus of intrigue and negotiation. Ambassadors from all the powers of Italy arrived to congratulate the king on his recovered freedom, and to sound his future intentions and the policy likely to be pursued by France. In the presence of

[1] Lettre de la Duchesse d'Alençon au roi, F. du Suppl. Fran., No. 100, Bibl. Roy.

[2] Gailliard, Hist. de François I.

the ministers of the Italian princes, Francis restrained not the expression of his indignation at the conduct pursued towards him by the emperor when in Spain. Frequently he was heard to describe his suspense, and the long intervals of mental and bodily languor he had endured at Madrid; and he reverted with angry contempt to the interested pity displayed by the emperor when his malady seemed hopeless. The king dwelt also, with great bitterness, on the discourtesy displayed towards his sister during her sojourn at the court of Toledo. He also drew a favourable contrast between the liberal and generous treatment which his ancestor, King John, experienced from the English after the battle of Poitiers, and the rigour of his own recent captivity. After listening to the expression of sentiments so bitterly hostile, the ambassadors of the Italian powers doubted not that the king would eventually proclaim his adherence to the League. The treaty was actually concluded in private by the 22d of May, 1526, before the arrival of the Burgundian deputies, so eagerly expected by the Spanish ambassadors. The pope placed himself openly at the head of the confederation. Due honours were allotted to the King of England, who was declared protector of the Holy League, which was joined by the Venetians, the Duke of Milan, the Swiss, and the Florentines.[1] It was stipulated between the allies to raise an army of 30,000 infantry, 2,500 men-at-arms, and 3,000 cavalry, with artillery. The King of France was to equip twelve large galleys, the Venetian Republic thirteen, and the pope agreed to place at the disposal of the allies his naval forces, then under the command of Andrea Doria. Genoa was first to be subjugated; next, the kingdom of Naples. Francisco Sforza was to be maintained in the duchy of Milan as its independent sovereign, and it was stipulated that he should espouse a French princess, and pay a yearly tribute of 50,000 crowns to the King of France. The confederates bound themselves never to lay down arms or to make peace with the emperor until the children of Francis were delivered from captivity. The King of England, if he acceded to the treaty, was to be gratified by a principality in the kingdom of Italy of the yearly value of 85,000 ducats, and Cardinal Wolsey with one worth 10,000 ducats.[2]

[1] Mezeray; Gailliard.

[2] Martin du Bellay; Capefigue, Hist. de François I. et la Renaissance.

During these negotiations the Burgundian deputies arrived at Cognac. In the presence of the imperial ambassadors they declared that Burgundy, by duty and by inclination, was French; and that the Burgundians would never consent to pass under the rule of Spain or of Austria. They declared, therefore, the treaty of Madrid of no effect as regarded the duchy; and while admitting the prerogative and the sovereign power of the king to govern them, they vehemently denied his right to transfer their allegiance to any foreign power without their unanimous assent. Upon this decisive opinion Francis took his stand; summoning the ambassadors, he declared his intention of retaining possession of Burgundy, in exchange for which he offered them a sum of two millions of golden crowns and the punctual execution of the remaining clauses of the treaty of Madrid.[1] An express was instantly despatched by the viceroy to the emperor with these tidings. Transported with fury, Charles immediately ordered the greatest rigour to be observed towards the poor young dauphin and his brother; he despatched peremptory commands to his ambassadors to refuse any offers which Francis might make, short of the literal performance of the treaty of Madrid. He accompanied these instructions, which were to be communicated to the king, with reflections and comments most insulting and exasperating to Francis. The emperor, however, suffered his ambassadors to linger at Cognac until the middle of the month of June. The plan of the operations of the Holy League being then satisfactorily arranged, with the concurrence of the pope and the King of England, they had the mortification of witnessing its solemn proclamation, June 24, 1526, at Cognac, when the viceroy took his leave.

In the midst of her own troubles and anxieties at this period Marguerite was not oblivious of her friends the Reformers. Her intercession with the king had stayed the criminal prosecution instituted against Louis de Berquin by the zealots of the Sorbonne during the captivity of Francis; but they still held him in custody within the precincts of the diocesan prison of Paris, where, though he was treated with mitigated rigour, all his writings were suppressed, and every book declared heretical by the Faculty of Theology was carefully denied him. Marguerite wrote, either from Paris or from Argentan, to solicit

[1] Gailliard.

Montmorency to remind the king of the continued captivity of his gentleman of the chamber, and to entreat Francis in her name to order his liberation. The marshal had just returned from Spain, where he had been despatched at the risk of great personal peril, to convey letters from Madame and the king to Queen Eleanor; who seems to have been greatly afflicted by the adverse state of affairs, which compelled her to return to her brother's court and assume a subordinate position there under the patronage of the young empress. Montmorency, who chiefly owed his elevation to supreme rank at the court of France, as grand master, to the interest made for him by the duchess, hastened to comply with her request. Francis ever imperiously resented the slightest disregard shown to his authority; and his missive despatched from Madrid directed the liberation of Louis de Berquin, and commanded the turbulent Sorbonnists to cease their vexatious inquisitions, and no longer to molest "ces hommes d'excellent savoir." Instead of obeying these commands, they had insolently petitioned the regent to disregard this royal mandate, and to grant them license still to continue their persecution. The Faculty had, moreover, detained Berquin, and commenced through the syndic Béda a scurrilous attack upon the writings of Erasmus, so esteemed and honoured both by the king and by his sister. This paper war was pursued with the greatest acrimony by the university. Béda's pen seemed impregnated with the gall of his bitter and violent nature. Erasmus replied to the taunts of the theologians of Paris with dignity and a moderation worthy of his repute as the first writer of his day. His ironical censures on the narrow-minded prejudices of the schoolmen, and his Christian tolerance towards those who differed from him on religious matters were the points which evoked the hostility of his adversaries. Immediately after the king's return into France, Erasmus addressed to him a letter complaining of the rigour and uncourtesy manifested by the Sorbonne in their unjust strictures on his writings. He warned the king that unless the insolent temerity of his theologians met with prompt repression, it would soon boldly assail royalty itself: "They design, sire, to establish a tyrannous authority, even over their princes; this, be assured, is the secret aim of their conduct. If the prince does not succumb to their will they will proclaim him a heretic and denounce him to the

Church, which, according to them, consists of a few apostate doctors and renegade monks."[1] Keener vengeance for the contumelious treatment he had received from the Sorbonne than this letter promised could not have been devised by Erasmus; it aroused in the fiery nature of Francis a volcano of wrath. From Cognac the king issued missives to the Sorbonne, demanding to be informed of the cause and progress of their quarrel with Erasmus; he addressed a monition to the parliament, requiring the court to prohibit the sale of Béda's books, and enjoined the members to exercise strict *surveillance* over the university, and to prevent the theologians from publishing and disseminating libels upon Erasmus.[2] The syndic having occasion to present himself at court upon some matter connected with the university, the king caused him to be arrested and detained in custody for a day, when he was released on his promise to appear whenever it was found expedient to require his presence.[3] Some months afterwards Francis devised an ingenious reprisal on the carping Béda. He commanded the university to examine and report on the orthodoxy of a book published by the syndic against Erasmus and Lefèvre. "It has been reported to me," said the king in his letter to the Sorbonne, "that this book is full of grave errors; of one thing I feel assured, namely, that it is filled with gross calumny, — a thing more reprehensible than much erroneous doctrine."[4]

The king was too violently indisposed against the Sorbonne for Montmorency's intercession in behalf of Berquin to fail. Francis eagerly seized the opportunity of demonstrating the supremacy of the royal authority over the most unqualified censures of the factious theologians. The order was transmitted for Berquin's release, which met with implicit obedience. "I thank you for the pleasure you have conferred upon me respecting poor Berquin, which I estimate as if you had personally succoured myself: therefore you may say that you have delivered me from prison, as I hold what you have performed for him to be done towards myself," wrote Marguerite to Anne de Montmorency.[5]

[1] Lettre d'Erasme au roi, dated June 16, 1526.

[2] Gailliard, Hist. de François I.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Du Boulai, Hist. de l'Université.

[5] Lettre de la Duchesse d'Alençon à M. de Montmorency, Bibl. Roy., F. Béth. No. 8551.

To the king, Marguerite sent a letter of warm thanks for his clemency towards her protégé.

When the duchess wrote these letters she was suffering from slight indisposition, and was under the medical treatment of her physician in ordinary, Jean Goinret, in whose fidelity she placed great reliance.[1] When Marguerite recovered she set out to join Madame at Cognac, in order, after a brief sojourn there, to accompany her to Paris. Montmorency offered to journey to St. Germain on purpose to escort the duchess to Cognac. Marguerite, however, refused to give him that trouble, because she was unwilling to take him from the performance of the varied duties appertaining to his new high official dignity at court.

Soon after Marguerite rejoined her mother the court removed to St. Germain-en-Laye for change of air for Madame, who experienced another slight attack of gout. Madame here spent much of her time reposing on her couch, occupied with needlework. As soon as the Duchess d'Angoulême became convalescent, Marguerite removed with her mother to Paris, to the Hôtel des Tuileries, an abode which specially appertained to Louisa. Soon after the commencement of her son's reign the duchess found the situation of the Palais de Tournelles unhealthy, from its proximity to the mouth of one of the great sewers of Paris. In the year 1519 Francis therefore exchanged his estate of Chanteloup, near to Montlehéry, for a mansion which Nicholas de Neuville, Seigneur de Villeroy, possessed, situated near the Tuileries,[2] and presented it to his mother. The duchess commanded the hôtel to be enlarged and embellished; and thenceforth took up her abode there whenever she sojourned in Paris; this, however, was rarely the case, as her health suffered from the impure atmosphere of the capital.

Marguerite, meantime, continued vigilantly to promote the interests of her favourite, Montmorency. At the age of thirty years he received at her solicitation the bâton of marshal of France; at thirty-four years of age he had attained the eminent dignities of marshal, grand master of the king's household, and

[1] Marguerite frequently despatched Goinret as her messenger to the king or Madame when she had important matters to impart. "Il est de mauvaise montre," said she to Montmorency, "mais il m'est seur et loyal."

[2] Or tile-works, from which the hôtel derived its name. The site of the palace of the Tuileries was also called, at the beginning of the fourteenth century, La Sablonnière, or the sandpits.

governor of Languedoc. Nothing now seemed wanting to satiate his most soaring ambition, except a consort whose lineage would confer additional honour on the first Christian baron of France. The Duchess d'Alençon, in the spring of the year 1526, undertook to negotiate an alliance for Montmorency.

Such was the marshal's favour that there is no doubt, could he have proved a royal descent, that the hand of the Princess Renée of France would have been bestowed upon him. Mademoiselle de Guise still remained unmarried; but for some reason the project of this alliance was not renewed. The Count de Villars and de Tende, brother of the Duchess d'Angoulême, and the legitimated son of Philip, Duke of Savoy, left three daughters, two of whom[1] had contracted illustrious marriages, while the youngest, Madelaine, lived at the court of France, under the patronage of Madame, who evinced great affection for her orphan niece. This lady, Marguerite selected for the consort of Montmorency. The marshal gladly accepted Madelaine's hand; and the marriage was celebrated at Blois, in the presence of the duchess. Madame gave a rich portion to her niece, consisting of the baronies of Fere, Gandelus, St. Hillier, and Montbéron; which donation was confirmed by the sign manual of Francis.[2] Madelaine de Savoye possessed no striking personal charms, though her features are reported to have been regular and expressive. Her character was grave and reserved, and her carriage stately and unbending. Professing almost a primitive rigidness of morals, Montmorency's dignified consort stood alone in a court of unbounded license; for her animated countrywomen looked with awe and wonder upon a deportment invulnerable to the shafts of slander, and upon a reputation which preserved its stainless purity. A devout Roman Catholic, Madelaine performed her religious duties with regularity and fervour. Her strong sense taught her that there could be no degradation to her lofty rank in administering her husband's domestic affairs; and from the year of his marriage, the large establishments of the Marshal de Montmorency in Paris and at Chantilly were conducted on a scale of combined magnificence and economy, as to challenge upon several occasions the applause of the king.

[1] Charlotte and Isabelle de Tende Savoye married the Counts de Brienne and de Bouchage.

[2] Le Laboureur, Additions aux Mémoires de Castelnau.

The chroniclers of the age, and especially Brantôme, mention the name of Madelaine de Savoye with profound veneration, and descant on her merits with a respect and caution as if treating of virtues almost incomprehensible to their minds, and fabulous. Speaking of Montmorency, Brantôme says: "This great noble had a consort, who was one of the wisest and most virtuous ladies of the age that could be found or seen anywhere. Whatever changes happened, or whatever new modes came into vogue at court, she never altered her attire, which was in the old French fashion, of flowing robes and pendent sleeves, which admirably became the magisterial dignity of her deportment. She was the daughter of Messire René, Bastard of Savoy, Grand Master of France, brother of Madame la Régente, and uncle of our king; and consequently a cavalier of valour and honour, and a devoted servant of the crown. It was a great piece of fortune and happiness for M. le Connéstable to espouse a lady so near of kin to Madame la Régente, and to the king." [1]

Montmorency lavished most reverential honour on his majestic consort; and as Madelaine deemed it beneath her dignity to be jealous of the attentions which the marshal bestowed on other ladies, their household was a model of domestic concord.

The sun of unclouded prosperity beneath which the Marshal de Montmorency lived failed not to develop the faults and failings of his character. Early inured to command, his deportment towards his inferiors was arrogant and imperious. His disposition presented an extraordinary assemblage of bad and commendable qualities. He was harsh and rigorous in the exercise of his military authority. A devout son of the Romish Church, he never omitted a morning without scrupulously performing his religious duties; but he would often, when with the army, break off in the midst of the mechanical utterance of his orisons, to send a soldier to the gallows,[2] or to order the most unmerciful punishments to be inflicted for some trivial breach of discipline. His loyal fidelity to his king, on the other hand, was above suspicion; he was liberal and indefatigable in the performance of his duties, an enemy to flatterers, and incorruptible in the discharge of his many responsible offices. He was simple in his deportment, yet inaccessible to familiarity; his speech was frank

[1] Brantôme, Éloge du Connétable de Montmorency.
[2] Brantôme, Vie du Connétable de Montmorency.

— sometimes offensively so. His disposition was selfish and cold; all the genuine warmth and admiration of which his nature was capable expended itself on his first and partial patroness, the Duchess d'Alençon. She was at once his powerful friend, his model of feminine beauty and grace, and the trusty partaker of his present and future designs. A feeling, however, eventually developed itself stronger than Montmorency's gratitude and reverence for Marguerite; this was his devotion for the Romish faith, — a creed which, without inspiring him with one sentiment of Christian forbearance and mercy, kindled in a mind so despotic a spirit of unpitying persecution. Educated at Amboise with Francis, Montmorency's abilities were of higher order than has been generally supposed. Historians have stated that the marshal's ignorance was so great that he was unable to sign his own name; nothing can be more erroneous than this supposition, as numbers of Montmorency's letters to the Duchess d'Alençon still exist. They are written tersely, and in language of profound respect. He usually concluded his epistles to Marguerite with the formula: "*Vostre très humble, et très hobéyssant subjet et serviteur.*" The marshal's writing, however, was not as legible to the eye as the subject of his epistle was easy of comprehension to the mind of his readers.

The intrigues and negotiations of Francis to elevate his sister to the English throne continued throughout the summer of the year 1526. Marguerite's correspondence, for many months after the return of her brother, evinces much disturbance of mind. The attachment felt by Henry VIII. for Anne Boleyn was now a fact publicly discussed throughout the continent. The duchess keenly felt how degrading was this competition with her former maid-of-honour for the hand of a monarch whose wife was living; and doubtless she strongly represented her disgust and grief to Madame. Her attachment to the King of Navarre also infinitely increased her anxiety and displeasure at her brother's unceremonious proceedings. Great mystery and obscurity envelop the negotiations of the French ambassadors in England at this period; for Francis, who well understood the unscrupulous and capricious character of Henry VIII., took abundant care not to compromise himself. Henry's preference for Anne Boleyn, whom he some time afterwards elevated to the rank of Marchioness of Pembroke, became so notorious that

Francis was at length unwillingly convinced that if the King of England obtained his divorce, Anne would share his throne. It was then represented to the king — probably by Madame and by Montmorency — that his sister's fame would suffer, should the secret overtures which he had made to Wolsey and other of the English ministers to accomplish her union with Henry transpire after the divorce of Queen Catherine, whilst Marguerite remained unmarried. Towards the latter part of the year 1526, therefore, Francis yielded a reluctant consent to his sister's marriage with the King of Navarre.

Marguerite's formal betrothment to the king probably took place about the month of November, or the beginning of December, at the palace of St. Germain-en-Laye, where Madame removed on quitting Paris. After the ceremony, for some unexplained reason, the Duchess d'Alençon travelled southwards again, into the dominions of the King of Navarre. In a letter which she wrote to the Countess de la Rochefoucault,[1] Marguerite speaks of herself as journeying attended by the King of Navarre. The opposition made by Francis to her marriage seems not even then to have been totally overcome, as Marguerite alludes to her union with the king as still uncertain, and for that reason she tells the countess that she dare not at present invite any of her relatives to the ceremony of her nuptials. "Ma cousine," wrote the duchess, "yesterday the King of Navarre decided that I should quit this place on Friday next. On Saturday I shall be at Tarbes, where I remain to spend the approaching festival,[2] and from thence journey to Prouille, at which place I intend to make some sojourn, and hope to see you there. I beg you very earnestly to meet me. If all things were as I could wish, there is not a child belonging to you that I would not take back with me, *but our marriage is not yet so certain an event that I dare venture to invite my relations*, as I will explain to you more at length when we meet." Marguerite then proceeds to console Madame de la Rochefoucault for some sorrow that had recently befallen her, probably the death of one of her children, but which the duchess does not explain. She says: "The love of life ought to be forgotten in our anxiety for honourable renown.

[1] Anne de Polignac.

[2] Of Christmas-day, or the Feast of the Présentation de Notre Dame, November 21.

I doubt not you believe that a thousand things may snatch us from this world, according to the holy will of Him who placed us here; and who, whether we be near or far away, in war or in peace, on horseback or calmly sleeping in our beds, takes and leaves whom He pleases, as it has been eternally decreed by His Almighty power and matchless love; in firm reliance upon which reposes our sole hope of everlasting salvation." [1]

At length whatever opposition Francis made to his sister's union with the King of Navarre was finally vanquished; and on her return to St. Germain her marriage contract was signed by the king. This document was that which had been drawn under the superintendence of Madame in the previous January, and it bears date of the third day of that month. This date shows that the contract was evidently prepared, and ready to receive the signature of the duchess, soon after her arrival at Roussillon from Spain. Marguerite then knew comparatively little of the King of Navarre; and the delay of her marriage at that time could not affect her, as it was a measure of expediency, rather than one of mutual attachment. In the marriage articles the style of the high contracting parties is given thus:—

"The following are the articles and treaty of marriage between the very high and puissant prince and princess, Monseigneur Henry, by the grace of God King of Navarre, Lord of Béarn, son of the very high and puissant John and Catherine, by the same grace late King and Queen of Navarre, Duke and Duchess of Gandie, de Montblanc, et de Peñafiel, Count and Countess of Foix, Lord and Lady of Béarn and Bigorre; and Madame Marguerite de France, only sister of the king, Duchess d'Alençon et de Berry, Countess de Roddes, du Perche, de Lisle, Viscountess de Lomaigne, and Lady of Baugé." [2]

In the enumeration of her titles Marguerite does not style herself Countess d'Armagnac, as her future husband claimed that territory; but in a subsequent article of the contract she made over to him her interest in the counties of Roddes, de Fezensac, de Perdraic, and de l'Isle; as also in the viscounties

[1] Lettre de la Duchesse d'Alençon à Madame de la Rochefoucault, MS. Bibl. Roy., F. de Béth., No. 8606.

[2] Contrat de mariage du roi Henri de Navarre et de Madame Marguerite, Duchesse d'Alençon, du 3 Janvier, 1526–7. Déposé aux archives de la Préfecture de Pau.

of Lomaigne, Auvillar, Gismoys, and Aysse et Ayen, comprehended within that county. Marguerite also resigns to the king the revenues of the county of Perche, and of the baronies of Chateauneuf and Senonches, conferred upon her for life as a marriage gift by Madame. She also relinquishes her control over the revenue of the duchy of Alençon, and her jointure of 10,000 livres Tournois, which she enjoyed as widow of the Duke d'Alençon. She gives the King of Navarre her gold and silver plate, and the sum of 45,000 livres, owing to her from the sisters and coheiresses [1] of the Duke d'Alençon. Marguerite reserves to herself sole and separate control over the revenues and administration of the "duchy of Berry, of the town and county of Bourges, and the lordships of Issoudun, Mehun-sur-Yevre, Dun-le-Roy, Vierzon, with their appurtenances and dependencies, their imposts and magazines, which it has pleased the king since his joyful accession to bestow upon his sister; the which duchy, towns, lands, lordships, imposts, magazines, first-fruits, revenues, collations, disposition of offices and benefices, my said lady the duchess shall enjoy and possess in her own name, and subject to her sole pleasure." The King of Navarre, on his part, assigned Marguerite a jointure of 20,000 livres on the lands in the principality of Béarn: "and the said King of Navarre promises, moreover, to present Madame Marguerite with rich rings and jewels, over and above what she now possesses, to the amount of 10,000 crowns." In the event of the decease of the King of Navarre, Marguerite was to remain sole tutoress and guardian of any children she might have borne him, and regent of the kingdom, principality, lands, and lordships of Navarre and Béarn, until the majority of her eldest son or daughter. The marriage contract was witnessed by Jean de Brinon, chancellor of the duchies of Alençon and of Berry; by the Seigneur de Fors, High Bailiff of Berry; and by the Lords of Vallemer, Lestang, and Chasteauvieux, all officers appointed by, and subject to, Marguerite herself; the document is signed by the duchess, and countersigned by her secretary, Darrehéry.

The marriage ceremony of Marguerite and the King of Navarre was performed January 24, 1527,[2] at St. Germain-en-Laye. In the same chapel Francis had received the hand of the Princess

[1] The Duchess de Vendôme and the Marchioness of Montferrat.

[2] Olhagaray, Hist. de Foix, Béarn, et Navarre.

Claude of France, at a period when the nation mourned the recent decease of the good Queen Anne de Bretagne. Marguerite's wedding was likewise solemnized at an epoch of great national depression; for the captivity of the young princes, and the implied dishonourable infraction of the treaty of Madrid shed gloom over the minds of Francis and his chivalrous subjects. The event, therefore, was not celebrated by any extraordinary rejoicings. The king gave a grand banquet in honour of the occasion; and there was a marvellous triumphant joust at St. Germain-en-Laye, which lasted for the space of eight days or more, when the assembly dispersed.[1]

The union of Marguerite with Henry d'Albret, however, was celebrated in prose and verse by all the poets and learned men of Europe. The beauty, virtues, and the lofty lineage of the noble pair were themes dilated upon with fervour; poems, allegories, letters, orations, and addresses, written in the learned languages and in every modern tongue of Europe, rendered homage to Marguerite's renown, and to the universal sympathy felt in her fate. Jean Dorat, preceptor to the king's pages, composed a Latin allegorical poem in honour of Marguerite's nuptials, in which he recounts how a pure and beautiful pearl (Margaris) was formed in the shell which supported the radiant figure of Venus, as she rose from the bosom of the waves. It was a stray drop of the fragrant and celestial dew from which the goddess sprang. One day during her pregnancy Louisa of Savoy, while eating oysters, accidentally swallowed this priceless gem; the daughter, therefore, that she gave birth to a few days afterwards partook of the divine nature of the goddess Venus, and was named Marguerite, or in the words of the ingenious Jean Dorat: —

> "Qualis et esca fuit, talem quoque ventre puellam
> Edidit, et nomen Margaris inde manet." [2]

Joachim du Bellay, nephew of the celebrated Cardinal du Bellay, propounded the question: "What verses ought the Muses to inspire, if Virtue herself were about to be married? For," added he, "such to-day is the epithalamium we have to compose,

[1] Sauval, Antiquités de Paris.

[2] Elégie sur le mariage d'Henri d'Albret et de Marguerite d'Angoulême, Deliciæ Poetarum Gallorum.

for Marguerite, the royal bride, is Virtue personified." Du Bellay embodies his idea thus: —

> "Qualia virtuti, virtus si nuberet ipsa
> Carmina Pieriis voce sonanda forent;
> Talia Margaridi, virtus nam Margaris ipsa est,
> Carmina Pieriis sunt modulanda sonis." [1]

Marguerite had entered her thirty-fifth year when she became the consort of Henri d'Albret. She was eleven years older than her husband, who was born in 1503. The poet Clément Marot, who exhausted the resources of his poetic art in praise of his patroness and to express his delight at her happy marriage, gives us the following portrait of Marguerite's mental and personal charms, in a poem which he composed and presented to her a few months before her union with the King of Navarre. She possessed, he says: —

> "Une doulceur assise en belle face,
> Qui la beaulté des plus belles efface;
> D'un regard chaste où n'habite nul vice;
> D'un rond parler, sans fard, sans artifice,
> Si beau, si bon, que qui cent ans l'ourroit,
> Jà de cent ans fascher ne s'en pourroit;
> Ung vif esprit, ung sçavoir qui estonne,
> Et par sus tout, une grace tant bonne,
> Soit à se taire ou soit en devisant,
> Que je voudrois estre assés souffisant
> Pour en papier escripre son mérite
> Ainsy qu'elle est dedans mon cueur escripte.
> Tous ces beaux dons et mille davantaige
> Sont en ung corps né de hault parentaige
> Et de grandeur tant droicte et bien formée,
> Que faicte semble exprès pour estre aymée
> D'hommes et Dieux!" [2]

[1] Deliciæ Poetarum Gallorum.
[2] Epistre de Marot à la Duchesse d'Alençon, MS. Bibl. Royale.

END OF VOL. I.